

The Economic Condition of  
The Protestant Christians in Malabar  
With Special Reference to the Basel Mission Church

By  
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## INTRODUCTION

The present survey has coincided with a period of economic and financial strain in the Basel Mission Church, Malabar. Indeed leaders of the Church and the parent mission have for some time felt the need for a comprehensive study of conditions among their people as a prelude to any substantial reform. To some extent this consciousness was found among the members of the Church as well. Both from the authorities in the Church, the mission, and the people concerned the present writer has therefore obtained a measure of sympathy, understanding, co-operation and support for which he must express profound gratitude. In addition to pronouncing official blessing upon the enterprise the mission was kind enough to place the services of a full-time evangelist named Mr. K. Mark at the investigator's disposal for a few months. Had it not been for the help rendered by this enthusiastic clergyman who personally knew most of the families from whom information had to be gathered, and whose presence invested the questionnaires they had to answer with a kind of ecclesiastical authority, perhaps many would have looked upon the endeavour in an entirely different spirit.

For information concerning congregations which do not belong to the Basel Mission Church, the pastors were approached. The questionnaire given to them sought to elicit information on the strength of the congregation, the districts from which the families came, the denominations to which they belonged,

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literacy, occupations, income and the financial resources of the Church.<sup>1</sup> As far as personal knowledge or the records they maintained permitted them to do, the pastors willingly answered the questionnaire, and were prepared whenever necessary to supplement written answers by personal discussion.

A more direct and thorough investigation was undertaken in the case of the Basel Mission Church. Six different questionnaires were used for the purpose. The first was a general questionnaire addressed to all the families in the community. An appeal for co-operation signed by the Presidents of the Mission and the Church served as an introduction to the questionnaire. It was further reinforced with a declaration signed by the investigator himself that the answers would be treated as strictly confidential, no reference being made to individual families in the report to be published. This questionnaire asked for information about age, sex, civil condition, education, employment, income, economic effects of conversion, property, debts, membership in co-operative societies, and relations abroad.<sup>2</sup> To ensure that the questions were clearly understood and answered with due care the investigator or his helper personally presented the forms and in most cases had the questions answered in their presence. As a rule people welcomed the idea of such an investigation. The questions concerning property and especially debt were however considered by some as a very unwelcome inroad into private affairs. In fact a few gentlemen

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1. See Appendix No. 1.

2. See Appendix No. 2.

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felt so strongly upon the point that instead of omitting those questions alone they returned the whole questionnaire unanswered. Some houses were also accidentally missed. Altogether 1578 families and 63 single individuals constituting 83% of the total population in the community (8239 persons out of 9921) answered this questionnaire.

The interest taken by the President of the Church in the survey however landed the investigator in one difficulty. As the members of the Church are bound to contribute a definite proportion of their income towards the expenses of the community, many recalcitrant members attempted to understate their earnings. This was especially so in the case of workers employed in certain weaving establishments. With the help of the factory managers, wages clerks, or other reliable employees who could help in the matter the figures given by factory hands were therefore revised. In the case of people employed in tile factories where wages are low, and in the case of clerks, teachers etc., whose salary was fairly well-known in the locality, the investigator found no attempt to understate the regular income. Conditions were different in the case of debts; for it was impossible to check the figures under debt in the same manner. Even to enquire about a man's debt was considered indelicate. To approach the lender to verify the amount would have created quite an outcry against the investigator. The investigator had therefore to content himself with verifying the amounts which the families claimed to have borrowed from co-operative credit societies. If the amount borrowed by a congregation from the co-operative

society which usually came to about a fourth of the total debts was found to be correctly reported, the remaining figures too were accepted as reliable.

Three other questionnaires were used for gathering information about cultivation, agricultural labour, and industrial labour.<sup>3</sup> These were answered by a few trustworthy cultivators and mill-hands from each station or factory concerned. After studying the answers given by cultivators some of them were again got together for a discussion on points about which the investigator could not form a clear impression. Similarly the information given by factory hands was either verified or supplemented with the help of factory managers, foremen, clerks, or other responsible men who were willing to oblige. The investigator has to thank the Secretary of the Cannanore Commonwealth Labour Union also for the help he rendered in the matter.

The last two questionnaires concerning domestic expenditure and expenditure on marriage proved to be somewhat unpopular.<sup>4</sup> About 400 families who live at Calicut were arranged in the order of their income and it was proposed to get the questionnaire on domestic expenditure answered by every seventh family receiving a monthly income of Rs. 100/- or less. Owing to lack of response from the families concerned this part of the investigation however could not be completed. Side by side with this attempt another endeavour was made to induce a representative number of families

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3. See Appendix Nos. 3, 4, and 5.

4. See Appendix Nos. 6 and 7.

from each income group to keep a regular account of domestic expenditure for a month. Although quite a large number of families accepted the note-books distributed for this purpose, the investigator was not able to get back more than a dozen with the necessary entries in full. No greater success accompanied the attempt to obtain details of expenditure in connection with marriages. A few families of course were obliging enough to answer the questionnaire upon this topic. But unfortunately the answers did not prove to be fully representative.

Clergymen in charge of the different Basel Mission congregations furnished some important statistics. The schedule given to them sought to elicit information about conversions, births, deaths, withdrawals, caste of converts, average age of marriage, infirmities, facilities for education, drinking among the people, and a few other details. As the old Baptismal Registers, Burial Registers, Family Registers, and Marriage Registers had to be ransacked in order to complete this schedule, the pastors in the larger congregations asked for the help of the evangelist who had been deputed to assist the investigator. In the smaller congregations the clergymen themselves kindly undertook all the trouble involved. The investigator's thanks are due to all those clergymen who gave of their valuable time to this painstaking work.

Further information of a very valuable type was obtained from the official records which the Presidents of the Mission and the Church placed at the disposal of the investigator. Among these records special reference must be made to the annual reports published



by the mission from its very inception, reports on the annual census taken by the mission, minutes of the Church Board, and the balance sheets of the Malabar Church Council. The investigator is also indebted to friends who lent him printed copies of the minutes of the Church Council which were not available in the office of the Church.

Very useful statistics were moreover kindly supplied by the Secretaries of Burial Funds, the Deputy Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Calicut, the Inspector of Factories, Coimbatore, and the Attorney to the U. B. M. Church in India Trust Association, Malabar. Official records, written answers to questions, and statistics however form but dry bones which have to be quickened by the experience of those who in positions of leadership are compelled to reflect upon the meaning of events. Numerous well-wishers among clergymen and laymen, business men and government servants have gladly assisted the investigator in this responsible task by giving him the benefit of their ideas and criticism. To all such his thanks are due, but especially to Mr. Samuel Aaron, Managing Director of Aaron's Spinning and Weaving Mills, Mr. M. Govinda Menon, B. A., B. L., Advocate and certain officers of the Agricultural and Co-operative Departments who gave very valuable advice on technical questions.

The investigator began his work about the middle of 1938. By the end of the next year when the European war began practically all the materials for the thesis were collected. Although a few months more have been taken up in tabulating the results and

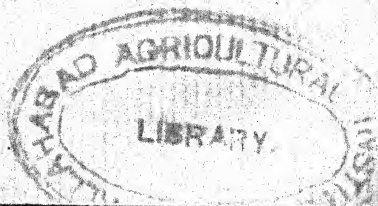
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examining their significance, generally speaking the conditions described in this report refer to the period before the war.

A list of the important publications consulted in preparing this thesis will be found in the bibliography.

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## CHAPTER I

### The Environment of the Church: Malabar and its People

Malabar, a name which was probably given by the Arabs in the tenth century A. D., literally means a land of hills. It is a narrow strip, 80 miles at the broadest, washed by the Arabian Sea in the west and shut out from the rest of the Presidency by the Western Ghats in the east. The district stretches for about 150 miles along the coast from the borders of South Canara in the north to the Cochin State in the south, and has an area of about 6000 sq. miles. A mile or two from the sandy shore the country swells into rolling downs. Farther inland the laterite hills which variegate the landscape grow more shaggy and uneven till at last they merge into the wooded slopes and majestic heights of the Western Ghats. From these heights which often rise above 6000 ft. half a dozen rivers, none of them more than a hundred miles in length, run down the slopes and meander among the hills to the Arabian Sea. <sup>1</sup>

Although temperature is extraordinarily uniform in Malabar, varying between the narrow limits of 78 degrees and 85 degrees (monthly mean) <sup>2</sup>, changes in the direction of winds and the distribution of rain provide the district with a regular succession of well-marked seasons. The first three months of the year

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1. Gazetteer of the Malabar District, Vol. 1, Chapter 1.
  2. Statistical Atlas, Malabar (1936), Appendix 7.

are dry. Early in April, however, the distant rumblings of thunder are heard, and the anxious ryot knows it is time to sow the seeds. Till the end of May thunderstorms bring stray showers which prevent the tender seedlings from withering under the relentless sun. In the first week of June gathering clouds darken the western sky and the South-West Monsoon breaks with full force. The heavy downpour continues unabated till the end of July, when the rains slacken, gradually dying away by the last week of September. In October, soon after the paddy flats are ready for the second crop, the North-East Monsoon begins to blow. As the wind has to travel right across the Deccan, and over the Ghats before it reaches the west coast, the North-East Monsoon brings only light showers to Malabar. These showers, at first more frequent and copious, slowly diminish in strength, and by the end of the year entirely disappear. Altogether Malabar receives an annual rainfall of about 120 inches.<sup>3</sup>

The Malabar ryot knows little of the incessant struggle with nature which cultivators in other districts are compelled to carry on in order that they might obtain the bare necessities of existence. However fickle the North-East Monsoon may sometimes prove to be, the South-West Monsoon has never been known to fail on this coast. Occasional floods may of course destroy the crops over limited areas, forcing the government to grant some remission of revenue; but the Malayalee farmer never has to face a drought which leaves his land completely barren, or reduces his family

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3. *op. cit.*, sections 3 and 4.



to utter starvation. <sup>4</sup> On the whole, therefore, the standard of living is admitted to be slightly higher in Malabar than in most other districts of the Presidency.

About 40% of the total area is cropped in Malabar. <sup>5</sup> Of the remaining land about 9,31,000 acres are described in revenue returns as cultivable waste other than fallow. But when it is remembered that poor land fit only for occasional cultivation accounts for a considerable part of this group, one can perceive how limited is the area which may yet be brought under cultivation before agricultural methods improve. On the light sandy soil slightly impregnated with salt which is found in a narrow strip along the coast cocoanut palms grow luxuriantly. <sup>6</sup> The soil in the interior belongs to the red ferruginous variety and is well suited for the cultivation of paddy, pepper, palms, and fruit trees. The low-lying flats beyond the coastal strip are sown with rice; the higher lands used for garden cultivation; and on the top of the laterite hills occasional crops of hill-rice or gingelly are grown. Even the malarial jungles on the slopes of the ghats have been a source of profit to the people. For these forests provide a considerable supply of teak and rose-wood so largely exported from Malabar. <sup>7</sup> On the slopes of these mountains, especially in the Wynaad taluk, European and Indian planters

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4. Gazetteer of the Malabar District, Vol. 1. p. 271.

5. Gazetteer of the Malabar District, Vol. 2 (1933), p. 134.

6. Gazetteer of the Malabar District, Vol. 1, p. 2.

7. According to the Report of the Calicut Chamber of Commerce for 1938-39 timber worth Rs. 8,10,245 was exported from Calicut in the year under report. See page 37.

have moreover opened up extensive tea estates which provide employment for hundreds of coolies from the plains of Malabar and the neighbouring districts.<sup>8</sup> In fact the tropical luxuriance and fertility of Malabar has been well known from antiquity; and brought to its shores the Phoenician sailors, Arab merchants, and in later times the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama.<sup>9</sup>

The history of modern industries in Malabar opens with a couple of factories established by the Basel Mission in the latter half of the 19th century. Out of about 13,000 people employed in the perennial factories of Malabar, about 6,900 are working in cotton factories and tile factories,<sup>10</sup> the first of whose kind were constructed by enterprising German missionaries in order to provide employment for early converts.<sup>11</sup> Textile factories and rope works too have attained considerable development in Malabar. Industries in this district are not, however, all crowded together in a few populous towns. In fact the six important towns in Malabar—Cannanore, Tellicherry, Badagara, Calicut, Palghat and

8. According to the Planting Directory of Southern India compiled by the Secretary, U. P. A. S. I. the total area under cultivation in the estates of Wynad is distributed as follows:—

(1) Tea : 12,576 acres. (2) Coffee : 3,763 acres. (3) Rubber 402 acres. (4) Minor products : 2,089 acres. See p. 53.

9. History of Kerala by K. P. Padmanabha Menon, Vol. I. notes on Letter No. 6, section on Cranganore, and note on Letter No. 3, section on Moors in Malabar.

10. Report on the Working of the Factories Act in the Madras Presidency for the year 1938, statement 3 (b).

11. Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol. 6, p. 251.

Cochin—have all emerged into prominence as seats of commerce or political centres rather than as the home of manufacturing industries. Situated at the mouth of the only gap which gives entrance to the Deccan plateau, or on the seacoast along the railway lines, these towns are eminently fitted to be emporiums for the agricultural and industrial products of Kerala.

According to the census of 1931 Malabar has a population of 3,533,944 people, and forms the third most densely populated district in the Presidency.<sup>12</sup> Malayalees, however, do not live in villages such as are found elsewhere in Southern India.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, probably due to the greater security which the West Coast enjoyed behind the ghats for many centuries, people have learned to construct their houses apart from one another, each cottage however humble standing by itself in an isolated compound. Among the inhabitants about 65% are Hindus, 33% Muslims, and 2% Christians.<sup>14</sup> Muslims are more numerous in Malabar than in any other district of the province. They are descended from the Arab merchants who began to settle on this coast from the 11th century onwards. In later times very large additions were made by conversion, either forcible as at the time of the Mysorean invasion or peaceful as in later times. The depressed classes have contributed very largely to the Muslim population of Malabar.<sup>15</sup>

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12. Census of India, 1931, Vol. 14, Part I, p. 21.

13. *op. cit.*, p. 53.

14. *op. cit.*, p. 330.

15. Gazetteer of the Malabar District, Vol. 1, p. 189.

The caste system which prevails among Hindus in Malabar is characterized by a social hierarchy peculiar to this coast, and by extraordinary rigidity. In social precedence of course the Malabar Brahmin known as the Nambutiri takes the foremost place.<sup>16</sup> The influence he wields, however, is derived not only from sacerdotal authority, but from the possession of extensive property in land. Among the lower castes the Nayars, the Thiyas, and the Cherumas deserve special notice. Before political power passed into the hands of the British, when Malabar was governed by feudal chieftains, the Nayars were the militia of the country, liable to be called out for military service at any time, and held land on military tenure. To-day they form a very prosperous community in Malabar, owning large estates and contributing the bulk of the learned professions.<sup>17</sup> The Thiyas, or Izhuvas as they are called in South Malabar, form numerically the strongest section of the Hindu society. They are believed to be descended from emigrants who came from Ceylon and introduced cocoanut cultivation into Malabar. Even at the present day they hold a practical monopoly of tree climbing and toddy drawing from cocoanut palms. Of course many families have long left the traditional occupation and distinguished themselves in industry, trade, and other walks of life. As a matter of fact in North Malabar Thiyas form a very prosperous people. The Cherumas were in all probability the inhabitants

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16. Malabar and Its Folk by T. K. Gopal Panikkar, Chapter 17.

17. Castes and Tribes of Southern India by Edgar Thurston, articles on Nayars and Thiyas.



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of the country when the Nayars conquered it.<sup>18</sup> In the 19th century they were agrarian slaves, doing farm labour on the rice lands of their masters. In spite of sections 370 and 371 of the Indian Penal Code which came into force in 1882, even as late as 1887 they are known to have been bought and sold and hired out with their full consent. Even to-day although before the law of the land they are free citizens, in practice they are bound to the land and suffer from many social and economic disabilities. Of course the awakening which Mahatma Gandhi has created in the public conscience is producing a rapid change in the outlook both of the Cheruma and his hereditary masters.

A glimpse into the idea of pollution entertained by the different castes in Malabar will show how harsh and inhuman the caste system has grown to be on this coast. An orthodox Hindu considers himself to be polluted by the touch of a person belonging to an inferior caste. At a certain point even touch is not considered necessary to convey pollution. A Nayadi coming within 300 ft. of a high caste gentleman is imagined to convey atmospheric pollution to his otherwise uncontaminated body.<sup>19</sup> Swami Vivekananda was so very shocked to find how Pariahs were treated in Malabar that he observed in one of his lectures:—<sup>20</sup> "What inference would you draw except that these Malabaris are all lunatics, their homes so many lunatic asylums, and

18. Manual of the Malabar District by William Logan, p. 153.

19. Castes and Tribes of Southern India by Edgar Thurston, Vol. 5, p. 275.

20. The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Part 3, Lecture on the Future of India, p. 294.

that they are to be treated with derision by every race in India until they mend their manners and know better." Perhaps the isolated position which Malabar occupied for many centuries from the highways of Indian history was responsible for this fantastic development. But it is most hopeful to note that humanizing influences have been fast penetrating into this stronghold of primeval orthodoxy.

The social organisation of the different castes in Malabar does not reveal to day the cohesion and authority which were connected with it in olden times. For with the decay of feudalism in the district and the spread of western ideas the social organisation received a set-back from whose effects it has not recovered.<sup>21</sup> In feudal times the chieftain enjoyed both political and social power. The headmen in the different castes, whether elected by the members or appointed by the chieftain, were subject to his authority.<sup>22</sup> When political power passed into the hands of the British Government social responsibilities were left behind to the chieftains without the power they once possessed to make their decisions effective. Therefore the headmen in many castes ceased to recognize any controlling force except the weight of public opinion, and the headman's authority in turn ceased to be recognized by the members of the caste. Although the headman's services may often be necessary in social and religious functions his supervision over the daily life of the community has thus been reduced to a minimum. With the decay of

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21. Malabar and Its Folk by T. K. Gopal Panikkar, pp. 96 & 97.

22. *op. cit.*, p. 204. Also Castes and Tribes of Southern India by Edgar Thurston, Vol. 7, p. 99.

the old social order which regulated the daily life of individuals, however, new caste organizations on a broader democratic foundation seem to be emerging.<sup>23</sup> They are concerned not with disputes in the community the maintenance of a healthy moral standard in particular families, or the upkeep of moribund social conventions; but with broad questions of policy, reform, and political privileges.

Perhaps the most peculiar feature of social life in Malabar is the system of inheritance and family organization known as the Marumakkathayam system.<sup>24</sup> It has little in common with Hindu law and usage found elsewhere in India under the Dayabhaga or the Mitakshara school. Inheritance is traced not through the male, but the female line. For, till the Madras Marumakkathayam Act of 1933 came into force, according to Marumakkathayam usage marriage involved no obligation on the part of the husband towards his wife and children. Neither party to such a

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23. The Malabar S. N. D. P. Yogam forms the best example of such an organization. It was established about thirteen years ago in order to propagate the message of Sri Narayana Guru Swami, the great Thiya reformer. All Thiyas, whether male or female, who pay the prescribed fees are eligible for membership. There are forty-two branches in Malabar. The association has all along been working to organize the Thiya community, and to promote its political, social, economic, and educational welfare. According to a report published in the Mathrubhumi on 2—1—'40 the chief resolutions passed at the thirteenth general conference of the Malabar S. N. D. P. Yogam dealt with the struggle for political freedom, the next census, and social disabilities.

24. Malabar and Its Folk by T. K. Gopal Panikkar, Chapter 3.

marriage, or sambandham as it is was called, became a member of the other family. The children had to be looked after by the mother's family, and had no claim to a share of the father's property or to maintenance. The family property belonged to all members descended from a common ancestress. It could not be divided, but all members were entitled to maintenance therefrom. The Marumakkathayam Act of 1933 made many drastic changes in this curious system. It legalised sambandham; made six months' notice on either side necessary for divorce; gave wife and children right to claim maintenance as well as a share of the father's property; and above all enacted that virtually every member of a tarwad, excepting a female having children, or children's children in the female line can claim individual partition.

The Marumakkathayam system as it existed before 1933 has been subjected to very severe criticism. The Malabar Marriage Bill Commission for example observed: "It offends against every principle of political economy and of healthy family life. It is based upon the doctrine that there is no merit in female virtue and no sin in unchastity... By freeing a man from the obligation of maintaining his wife and offspring it sanctions the reckless propagation of the species".<sup>25</sup> But whatever might have been the defects of the Marumakkathayam system, it was not without its advantages. In most other districts we read of a gradual decrease in the average area of holdings due to family

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25. Quoted by T. K. Gopal Panikkar in *Malabar and Its Folk*, p. 44.



partitions. On the other hand in Malabar where the Marumakkathayam system of inheritance is in vogue the resettlement officer found in 1931 that sub-division and fragmentation had not yet become a problem.<sup>26</sup> The Madras Marumakkathayam Act of 1933 which sanctions the partition of family estates has, of course, altered the situation; but a few more years will have to elapse before the effects of this change become perceptible.

Malabar is not without its agrarian problems.<sup>27</sup> Almost all land in the district, including waste land and forest, forms the private property with allodial rights, of a few landlords called Janmies.<sup>28</sup> Of course the janmi has to pay land revenue assessed at about one-third of the net produce of the soil. The larger part of the land however is not cultivated by the janmi. On the other hand he leases out most of it on a variety of tenures, the most important of which are the Kanam tenure and the Verumpattam tenure.<sup>29</sup> The kanam tenure partakes of the nature both of a lease and a mortgage. The tenant deposits an amount with the janmi on which the latter allows a certain interest, and takes a lease, usually for 12 years, of a piece of land. The rent payable by the tenant is fixed by mutual agreement, and from this the interest payable

26. Resettlement Scheme Report for the Eight Plains Taluks of the Malabar District by Mac Even, published as Supplement to the Malabar District Gazette, January 1931, p. 28.

27. Gazetteer of the Malabar District, Vol. 1, p. 233.

28. Malabar Tenancy Problem by P. Kodanda Rao, p. 1.

29. Chapter on the Land System of Malabar by Dr. V. K. John, Bar-at-Law, in Malabar and Its Folk, p. 256.

on the kanam amount is deducted. In order to renew the lease for a fresh period a renewal fee has to be paid by the tenant. If at the end of 12 years the janmi resumes the land, he has to return to the tenant the kanam amount deposited with him, and pay compensation for the improvements effected. The verumpattam tenant obtains his land either from the kanamdar or direct from the janmi.<sup>30</sup> He holds the land either as a tenant-at-will or for a fixed term, and actually cultivates the soil. The rent is mutually agreed upon, and on eviction the verumpattamdar is entitled to compensation for improvements made with the consent of the janmi. <sup>implied or expressed</sup> Till the Malabar Tenancy Act of 1930 was passed cultivating tenants were in a very deplorable condition. Without fixity of tenure, rack-rented, and subjected to various other exactions and indignities theirs was a life of abject misery and servitude. In fact the fanatical Mopla riots which broke out again and again in South Malabar seem to have been caused partly by agrarian discontent.<sup>31</sup> The Malabar Tenancy Act of 1930 opened a new chapter in the lives on the Malabar peasantry. The provisions of this act have given security of tenure to tenants, fixed a limit to renewal fees as well as rent, and saved the tenants from unfair exactions. A committee appointed by the Government has recently investigated how far these provisions need to be modified in the light of experience and the public are eagerly waiting for their report. The Madras Agriculturists Relief Act of 1938 forms another landmark in the

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30. Malabar Tenancy Problem by P. Kodanda Rao, p. 4.

31. Gazetteer of the Malabar District, Vol. I, p. 89.

history of agrarian reform in this district as well as in other parts of the Presidency. A survey of three sample villages made by the revenue department in 1935 had shown that each family owed an average debt of Rs. 111-0-0.<sup>32</sup> By providing for the scaling down of debts and arrears of rent this act has lightened a burden under which the Malayalee peasant, like his comrades in other districts, has groaned helplessly for generations.<sup>33</sup>

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32. Report on Agricultural Indebtedness in the Madras Presidency by W. R. S. Satyanathan, p. 39.

33. Madras Administration 1937-1938, p. 116.

## CHAPTER II

### The History of the Protestant Church in Malabar

Christianity in Malabar is almost as old as the Christian era, and finds expression in three distinct communities conforming to the three broad divisions of the universal church. The Syrian Christian community of the West Coast which has its head-quarters in Travancore, and traces its origin from the Apostle St. Thomas,<sup>1</sup> has preserved in this district the picturesque traditions of the Eastern Church. Roman Catholicism, on the other hand, gained a foot-hold in Malabar at a much later date, when the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama opened up a new route to this coast for European commerce and European culture.<sup>2</sup> The Protestant faith was the last to arrive. It was not till 1839 that the Basel Mission Society, to whose labour and sacrifice the majority of Protestant Christians in Malabar owe their conversion, established their first outpost in this district.

The inception of the Basel Mission Society was surrounded by a certain amount of romance.<sup>3</sup> Napoleon had escaped from his prison in the Island of Elba and

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1. A History of Kerala by K. P. Padmanabha Menon, notes on Letter XVI, Sections 3 and 5.
  2. Gazetteer of Malabar, Chapter III, Sections on Syrian Christians and Roman Catholics.
  3. The Eighteenth Report of the Basel Mission on the West Coast of India for the year 1857, and the Twenty-sixth Report for the year 1865, introductory paragraphs.



the whole of Europe once again plunged into convulsions. Situated close to the frontiers of Germany and France, the wealthy city of Basel soon became involved. The French general Barbanegre who was besieged by the allies in the neighbouring fortress of Huningen threw fifty bombs into the city and threatened it with entire destruction. At this time a group of devout Christians in Basel, who were in the habit of meeting together to read the periodical accounts of Moravian and English missions decided to found a seminary for training missionaries, if the Lord should spare their city from the desolation with which it was threatened. The French general capitulated. Napoleon himself met his doom at Waterloo. And the same year (1815) in grateful recognition of their deliverance those Christian friends applied to the magistrate and obtained permission to erect an institution "where men of whatever denomination or rank, but of an acknowledged, irreproachable and Christian character might obtain a suitable education, in order to go out to the innumerable multitude of heathen as useful Missionaries, to proclaim to them the saving gospel of Christ according to His commandment."

At first the Basel Mission Society had no intention of engaging in direct missionary activity. Their object was merely to train missionaries for other societies which had already started evangelistic work in foreign lands. In fact, many British and Continental societies took advantage of the facility provided by the college at Basel. The largest number of missionaries from this college seems to have been supplied to the Church Missionary Society and came to their fields in India.

A few years after the origin when contributions increased, naturally the Basel Mission Society was emboldened to establish missions of their own in Africa, the West Coast of India, and China. The first batch of three missionaries for this coast landed at Calicut in 1834, and travelling north-wards commenced work with their head-quarters at Mangalore in South Canara.

It was the gift of a hill and bungalow made by the District Judge of North Malabar that led the Basel Mission to open their first station in this district at Nettur near Tellicherry in 1839.<sup>4</sup> Dr. H. Gundert and Rev. S. Hebich, the two pioneer missionaries, who blazed the trail for the Basel Mission in Malabar were both men of outstanding personality. Endowed with rare spiritual influence, and talents differing the one from the other, these two gentlemen proved to be an uncommonly happy combination, and have left behind a lasting impression upon the Malabar Church. Together they inaugurated those lines of activity which have been successfully continued by the mission up to the present time. The open air sermons which Samuel Hebich delivered, often amidst much opposition, at crowded fairs or festivals, and the courage as well as unexpected triumph with which he carried the Gospel to the dreaded homes of military officers at Cannanore, won for him an almost mythical celebrity in these parts.<sup>5</sup> Dr. Gundert, a brilliant scholar of the Tübingen University, on the other hand gave his life to the

4. History of the Basel Mission Church in Malabar (Malayalam), Chapter IV.
5. Samuel Hebich of India by G. N. Thomssen, Chapters I and XIII. xiv and xxi.

literary and educational work of the mission. As the author of the first standard dictionary and grammar in Malayalam, not to mention many text-books on history, geography, and other subjects for Mission Schools, he has laid Malayalees under a deep debt of gratitude.<sup>6</sup> The Christian community in Malabar will, however, cherish his memory especially for some of the earliest translations from the Bible into their mother-tongue.<sup>7</sup>

As conversions increased and the mission's sphere of activity expanded, additions also were made from time to time to the number of European workers stationed in this district. Just before the Great European War there were about seventy missionary ladies and gentlemen labouring in Malabar.<sup>8</sup> But it was evident from the very beginning that the needs of a growing Church, and the many thousands of non-Christians by whom they were surrounded could not be adequately met by foreign missionaries alone. Therefore educational facilities were provided to train Malayalee Christians both for the ministry and for educational work.<sup>9</sup>

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6. Introduction to A. R. Raja Varma's Keralapaniniyam and the Seventy-Fourth Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1913, Section VI, Literary Work, Centenary of a Great Literary Man's Birth.
  7. A lecture delivered by Rev. W. Dilger at Freudenstatt in 1902 on the difficulties presented by the vernaculars on the mission field in India with reference to the translation of the Bible (German).
  8. The Seventy-Forth Report of the Basel Mission in South Western India for the year 1913, Tabular view of stations, agents, and Churches.
  9. The Fifty-Fifth Report of the Basel Mission in South-Western India for the year 1894, Section 3, on Education.

In addition to Elementary Schools intended for propagating the Gospel through the length and breadth of Malabar, special institutions were founded in every Christian congregation to raise the percentage of literacy in the community. From these Parochial Schools, which mostly taught up to the Vth class, capable students could proceed to one of the High Schools, or the Second Grade College maintained by the mission.<sup>10</sup> Parents who were unable to meet the full expenses of giving a High School education to their children were invited to send them to the Boarding Home maintained at Nettur in connection with one of the Secondary Schools. Those who were chosen for the ministry after their High School course were at first sent to Mangalore for a four years' theological education; but afterwards a Theological Seminary for Malayalee candidates was opened at Nettur.<sup>11</sup> Here the mission also maintained a Normal School in order to train teachers for the many elementary schools under their management. Thus in 1913 the Basel Mission had in Malabar about 280 Indian workers consisting of evangelists, Bible women, colporteurs, christian school

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10. At present the mission maintains a Second Grade College with High School classes attached at Calicut (1881), besides other High Schools at Tellicherry (1878), Badagara (1923), and Palghat (1904). They were raised to the High School standard in the years mentioned, but were in existence as Middle Schools before. There is also a Girls' High School at Calicut (1902). The Mission was maintaining a separate High School for Christian students at Nettur, but this had to be closed in 1908.

11. The Fiftieth Report of the Basel Mission Society in South-Western India for 1889, Introduction.

masters, Christian school mistresses, and non-Christian teachers. In addition to the educational institutions mentioned above the mission also maintained two orphanages<sup>12</sup> and four hospitals, specially for the benefit of the Church. As facilities for medical aid have rapidly increased in the district, and the mission had to face serious financial difficulties, the medical department was practically closed some years ago.

It was Rev. J. Josenhans, Principal of the College for missionaries at Basel and General Secretary of the Mission, who was deputed by the Home Committee in 1851 to inspect their Indian field, that gave ecclesiastical laws and a social organization to the infant Church. On arrival he found that the Malayalee converts who were gathered together from different sections of Hindu society formed four isolated congregations at Cannanore, Tellicherry, Chombala, and Calicut. Like other Churches which had been founded by the Basel Mission in South Mahratta, South Canara, and the Nilgiris, these congregations were without a uniform system of government or a co-ordinated plan of action. To ensure the ordered development of a united Basel Mission Church in Western India Rev. J. Josenhans found it necessary to devise for the converts the pattern of a new social order and ecclesiastical polity. The measures which he took to this end may well be described in the words of his own biographer.<sup>13</sup>

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12. The orphanage for boys is now situated at Parapperi near Codacal, and the orphanage for girls at Chombala.
  13. The Forty-Fifth Report of the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society in South-Western India for 1884: A short sketch of the Life of the Rev. J. F. Josenhans.



"He defined the duties and rights of the Missionaries towards the Home Committee and among themselves, laid down different rules of business, and arranged a division of labour and supervision. In accordance with this the Missionaries have their regular local meetings (conferences) which take place as often as required; District Meetings, when all the Missionaries of the same District meet once a year; and General Meetings when the different office-bearers and deputies from all four Mission Districts meet every four years for consultation, and to advise the Home Committee.

"As regards the congregations, he collected the rules which different Missionaries had found useful for the guidance of their Churches and compiled a short compendium of Church rules. He also formed Presbyteries for each Parish, and Synods for each District, in which the Europeans were to be ex-officio members, whereas each congregation was represented by 3 to 7 Elders, chosen by themselves, and approved of by the local Missionary Conferences.

"To enable each Church to look after its own spiritual wants he also created Church funds, which he endowed with fields and cocoanut gardens, formerly belonging to the Mission, and imposed Church-taxes, and encouraged charity. He further appointed a committee composed of Drs. Mogling and Gundert, and Mr. Ammann to make a selection from the Prayer-Books of the different Lutheran and Reformed Churches for the compilation of a Liturgy, which was to be translated into Canarese, Malayalam, Tulu and English in order to be read in the different Basel German Evangelical Mission Churches."

From the middle of the 19th century when Rev. J. Josenhans visited Malabar, down to the outbreak of the Great European War when the Basel Mission had to suspend its activities for a time, there was slow but steady progress in the Church. In 1851 we hear only of four congregations with a membership of about 550 souls in Malabar.<sup>14</sup> The report for 1913 mentions eight stations and about forty outstations with a membership of nearly 7600 souls. This progress was not, however, confined to numerical strength. During these six decades the Church had been gradually advancing towards the attainment of both self-support and self-government. In 1861 annual contributions from members towards the expenses of the Church amounted to about 6½ annas per head.<sup>15</sup> By 1912 the average contribution per Church member had risen to Rs. 1-5-0.<sup>16</sup> Similarly great strides had been made also towards self-government. Indian pastors were, wherever possible, given independent positions. They were not only made responsible for conducting divine services, and the management of Parochial Schools, but had as a rule also to preside over the meetings of the presbyteries. In the presbyteries of the larger stations, where the number of European missionaries was great, the Europeans were not allowed to occupy more than 1/3 of the seats on the

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14. Twelfth Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission for 1851: Census of the Mission.
  15. Thirty-Third Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for 1872: Report written for the Mission Conference at Allahabad.
  16. The Seventy-Third Report of the Basel Mission in South-Western India for 1912: The Indian Church, Pecuniary Contributions.

presbytery. Similarly the number of European members in District Synods too was reduced. In addition to this the Home Committee also sanctioned the formation of a General Synod Board composed of three European members nominated by the Home Board, and three Indian members elected by the three Synods. The General Synod Board was authorized to govern the whole Church on the West Coast according to the existing Church rules.<sup>17</sup>

The Great War which broke out in 1914 imparted to the progress of the Church a momentum which almost proved its ruin. The Basel Mission was considered by the Government to be a German organization. Most of the missionaries, being Germans, had to leave for the internment camp, and all properties which belonged to the Basel Mission were taken over by the Custodian of Enemy Property.<sup>18</sup> What attempts other missionary societies made to get back these properties for the benefit of the Malabar Church, and how far these endeavours were successful will be examined in a subsequent chapter. For the present it is enough to note that overnight the Malabar Church found itself deprived of the spiritual guidance and financial support which the Basel Mission had so generously supplied for 75 years.

Along with other mission fields operated by German missions in India, the activities in Malabar also were handed over by the Government to the

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17. *op. cit.*, The Indian Church, Self-government.

18. Minutes of the Malabar Church Council which met in August, 1920: Speech by Dr. J. J. Banninga.



National Missionary (now Christian) Council. The German Missions Committee of the National Missionary Council approached various missionary societies with a request to undertake the responsibilities from which the Basel Mission had been compelled so abruptly to withdraw. At last the South India United Church agreed to shoulder the responsibility, if the Malabar Church should affiliate itself with that body. As negotiations for effecting such a union had been set on foot before the Basel Mission was compelled to withdraw from the field, the Malabar Church did not feel much difficulty in accepting the proposal. Accordingly in 1919 the representatives of the Malabar Church met and adopted a new constitution investing the government of the Malabar Church in a body of elected representatives called the Malabar Church Council, and affiliating the Malabar Church with the federation of South Indian Churches known as the S. I. U. C. In order to carry on the day to day administration of the Church, the Malabar Church Council was to appoint an executive committee in which missionaries who came to Malabar as representatives of the S. I. U. C. were to have their place.<sup>19</sup>

The jurisdiction of the Church Council and the Church Board was, however, rigidly circumscribed. While technically they possessed almost unqualified power in administering the affairs directly connected with the governance of the Church, they were dependent to a very large extent for their finances upon the

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19. Constitution of the Malabar Church, S. I. U. C. (1919.)

S. I. U. C.<sup>20</sup> Besides, the evangelistic, medical and educational departments of the late Basel Mission were kept entirely beyond the purview of the Church Council. The original intention of the S. I. U. C. seems to have been to separate these three departments from the administration of the Church, and keep them directly under their supervision. But in response to a request made by the Malabar Church Board it was afterwards resolved to grant them an active part in the management of what is called "mission work" as well.<sup>21</sup> These arrangements, however, proved to be a source of endless friction and strife in the Church. Owing to representations made by the S. I. U. C., therefore, the German Missions Committee finally removed mission work from the supervision of the Church Council in 1925.<sup>22</sup>

Under the new arrangement the financial situation of the Church Council deteriorated to such an extent that the Church Board was compelled to hand over the orphanages and parochial schools to the Mission Committee.<sup>23</sup> In 1927 when the Basel Mission took back the responsibility for mission work in Malabar more prosperous days seemed to have set in for the Church. But it was not to be. Trouble started over certain changes which were made in the constitution in order

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20. eg. According to the balance sheet for 1922 the income of the Malabar Church was Rs. 12,071, expenditure Rs. 16,392.

21. History of the Basel Mission Church, Malabar, Chapter XIV.

22. Minutes of the Malabar Church Council which met in August 1925: speech by the Convener of the German Missions Committee.

23. Minutes of the Malabar Church Council which met in February 1926, p. 6.

to facilitate co-operation between the Church and the Mission. Violent quarrels arose; the congregation at Chowa separated from the main body; and a civil suit had to be instituted to get back the Church building from their hands. Conditions seemed to be improving within the Church after 1931. But the political situation of Germany and the unexpected fall in the financial resources of the Basel Mission threw up another cloud over the horizon. The subsidy which the Basel Mission had been giving to the Church Council since the missionaries returned to Malabar came to be reduced after 1933, and the Church Council was moreover compelled by the turn of events to take back from the mission the responsibility for the parochial schools.<sup>24</sup> To make matters worse once again dissensions began in the Church over certain amendments which were made in the constitution in order to re-establish the connection which had existed between the Basel Mission Churches in South Mahratta, South Canara, and Malabar till the outbreak of the Great European War. These storms have, however, blown over. And to-day, in spite of financial difficulties, the Church seems to have entered upon quieter and more hopeful days.

At present the Basel Mission Church in Malabar consists of fourteen pastorates.<sup>25</sup> A glance at the map will show that all these pastorates are situated on the

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24. Minutes of the Malabar Church Council which met in November, 1932: Statement by Dr. K. Hartenstein.

25. These pastorates are: Pappinisherry, Cannanore, Chowa, Nettur, Tellicherry, Chombala, Calicut, Puthiyara, Feroke, Codakkal, Chalisherry, Vaniaculum, Palghat, Melparamba.

plains. The malarial tracts on the mountain slopes of the Wynaad Taluk, in fact, remained unexplored by Protestant Missionaries till 1880 when the Basel Mission, at the request of certain Christian emigrants and encouraged by many European planters, resolved to open a new station at Manantoddy.<sup>26</sup> But the work among the native Christians and non-Christians did not prove as encouraging as had been anticipated; the subscriptions promised by planters proved to be quite inadequate for the enterprise; and therefore, with great reluctance, the missionary in charge was withdrawn from the field in 1882.

Eleven years later, Rev. A. H. Lash, the first C. M. S. Missionary in the Nilgiris realised the need for pastoral care among the Christian labourers who flocked to the tea and coffee estates in Wynaad. He also saw the possibility of extending the Kingdom of God among the primitive hill-tribes who inhabited this wild and malarial region. Thus Mr. Sathyanathan Harding was appointed catechist at Gudalur, in the Nilgiris District, and until his death in 1911, gave very devoted pioneer service, particularly among the Kurichers and Kurumbers. At the start there were about 175 baptised Protestant Christians, mostly immigrants from the Tamil country. In course of time the membership of the Church has risen to 1700 souls. But from the beginning the Wynaad Mission has been practically a private enterprise of the Nilgiris Missionary

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26. The Forty-Third Report of the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society in South-Western India for 1882, Section III on Malabar.

with little or no support from the C. M. S. Head-quarters. The necessary funds are raised either locally, or from friends in England.<sup>27</sup>

Anglican Churches are not, however, confined to the mountain slopes of Wynaad. For, in addition to stray families attached to the established Church of India at Cannanore, Tellicherry, Palghat, and Malappuram, there is an Indian pastorate of the Madras Diocese in Calicut. Its beginnings are to be sought in the prayer meetings of Indian Anglicans, which, in the eighties of the last century, were conducted in the local Basel Mission Church. The original congregation was mostly Tamil, and was ministered to by Tamil clergymen for many years. At present the pastorate is affiliated to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, which like the C. M. S. is working in the Madras Diocese. Under an arrangement with the Travancore Diocese, clergymen from that Diocese, whose services are lent for five years at a time, have been in charge of the pastorate since 1930.<sup>28</sup>

No account of the Protestant Church in Malabar will be complete without a reference to the sectarian denominations at work in these parts. For, though numerically their adherents are at the bottom of the scale, forming but a small minority of the Protestant Church, these denominations have earned for themselves a dubious reputation by presenting to the non-

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27. Notes on the History of the C. M. S. Wynaad Mission kindly supplied by Rev. H. B. Roberts, M. A., C. M. S. Missionary.

28. Annual Report of the St. Mary's Church Indian Pastorate, Calicut, for the year 1936.



Christian communities around the undignified spectacle of Protestantism at war with itself. Instead of carrying the Gospel to the non-Christians, who offer a wide field for missionary activity, sectarian missionaries belonging to different parties have, from the close of the last century, made incursion into the small band of Basel Mission Christians in Malabar.<sup>29</sup> Thus sectarian missionaries have no doubt succeeded in gathering small groups of adherents, especially at Calicut and Cannanore. But, at the same time, they have destroyed the quietude of a sister community, and lowered, in the eyes of the Hindu and Mussulman brethren by whom the Churches are surrounded, the cause which is dear to all denominations alike.

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29. The Fifty-Ninth Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1898, Section 3, Spiritual Life of Our Congregations, Calicut.

## CHAPTER III

### Conversion—A Break with the Past

The circumstances connected with conversion have often exercised a very far-reaching influence upon the economic development of Christian communities. Mass movements have, for example, "by preserving the integration of the individual in his group" protected many Churches from social dislocation and economic loss.<sup>1</sup> Mass movements do not, however, account for the entire Protestant community in India. According to Dr. J. R. Mott about 80% of the Protestants are the product of mass movements.<sup>2</sup> The remaining 20% consist of those who embraced Christianity either as individuals or in families, and their descendants.

The social and economic problems which early missionaries created by isolating such converts from their natural environment have led many observers in modern times to be critical of their policy and to deplore its consequences. The Bankura Christian community of Bengal may be mentioned as a typical example of what is called "conversion by extraction". Fifty years ago no such thing as the local Christian community is said to have existed. Evangelistic work had, however, been carried on in the neighbourhood, and scattered groups of people were baptized. But as their location in different villages was considered prejudicial to their

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1. Christian Mass Movements in India by J. W. Pickett, Chapter XV.

2. *op. cit.*, Foreword by Dr. J. R. Mott.

development into a strong and independent community, a scheme was prepared to bring these widely separated families into a single locality. Land was purchased and the Christian village came into existence. An economic survey of the community made before the Tambaram Conference, however, shows that a considerable blunder of stratagy was committed when those families who were agriculturists were uprooted from their home and established in a place where they were given no land for cultivation. Instead of creating a virile, self-supporting Christian society, this experiment, like similiar experiments elsewhere, is said to have produced a generation which looks for sustenance to the mission which took their fathers from their original villages.<sup>3</sup>

The annals of the Protestant Church in Malabar do not contain a single instance of mass conversion. There was, of course, some indication of a tendency towards mass movement among the Thiyas in the first decade of this century.<sup>4</sup> But the hopes which were awakened by the early symptoms have failed to materialise. From the very beginning converts have entered the Basel Mission Church in Malabar in isolated families or as individuals. And except in the case of two new stations opened by the Basel Mission at Madai and Mattul after the Great War, converts have been, for reasons which will be presently examined, uprooted from their home and village to begin life at a common centre

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3. Bankura Christian Community by C. F. Ball, History of the Community, p. 1.

4. The Sixty-Seventh Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1906, p. 76.

under new conditions.<sup>5</sup> Investigators who are impressed by the economic problems which face the Protestant community in Malabar to-day may, therefore, be tempted to condemn the social fabric of the Church as the outcome of misguided zeal and missionary folly. One has, however, only to turn to the pages of the reports published by the Basel Mission in the last century to perceive how very unfair such a verdict would be. Comparing converts from Hinduism at Udapy in South Canara with converts at other stations on their Indian field the report for 1874 for example remarks, "We have in these parts the great advantage that Christians usually remain in their former positions, villages and houses, and that altogether the real Hindu community is much better reached by these conversions. We prefer this of course to the necessity that so frequently is forced by the families upon converts in other places against their and our wish, of leaving house and family and occupation, and being thus isolated from their former surroundings and plucked out of their natural ground. The time will certainly come in other places too when Hindus may become Christians without being driven from their home. But even now we protest that it is not we who are to blame for these separations".<sup>6</sup> One may confidently assert therefore

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5. At other stations even now conditions have not entirely changed. For example, at Chombala from 1933 to 1938 there were 33 conversions. Of these only 12 were from the immediate neighbourhood. At Vaniamkulam from 1933 to 1938 there were 52 conversions. Of these only 22 were from the immediate neighbourhood.

6. Thirty-Fifth Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1874, p. 11.

that a policy of extraction was not willingly chosen by the early missionaries who laboured in Malabar; but came to be forced upon them by circumstances which were beyond their control.

The narrow exclusiveness of the caste system<sup>7</sup> as it is practised in Malabar made it impossible for a convert to continue in the society to which he belonged. A glance at conditions which have obtained in other parts of India will help one to realise how difficult was the situation in this district. At the last census it was found in the United Provinces that converts to Christianity remained in their caste, inter-dining and inter-marrying freely with non-Christian members. In fact, cases seem to have been mentioned where the arrangement had survived for thirty years after conversion.<sup>8</sup> Similarly in the Nagercoil area of South Travancore Bishop Pickett found Christian Nadars serving on caste panchayats to try offences against caste rules. As proof that they were still treated as brothers by their caste fellows converts told him of invitations to weddings and the readiness of non-Christian Nadars to eat with them.<sup>9</sup> Although the most progressive Hindu families have now begun to make a concession in the matter of inter-dining, such free and unfettered social intercourse between Christian converts and the members of the castes to which they previously belonged is not known anywhere in Malabar to-day; it would have been unimaginable in the last century. On the other

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7. See Chapter I.

8. *The Economic Background of the Church in the United Provinces*, by E. C. Bhatt, M. A., p. 82.

9. *Christian Mass Movements in India* by J. W. Pickett, p. 178.



hand, physical contact with a convert is considered in these parts to make an orthodox Hindu ceremonially unclean.<sup>10</sup> Converts have been regarded in Malabar as outcastes and even the nearest relations gave up all intercourse with one who embraced Christianity.<sup>11</sup> Instances are known in which even the funeral rites were performed by kinsmen for people who had accepted the Christian message.

The Marumakkathayam system of family organisation and inheritance prevalent in Malabar made the convert's fate all the more precarious. Under this system "a mother and all her children, both male and female, all her grandchildren by her daughters, all her brothers and sisters and the descendants on the sister's side, in short all the woman's relatives on the female side, however distant their relationship, live together in the same block of buildings, have a common table, enjoy all her property, and share it after her death in common with one another."<sup>12</sup> There are wealthy Nair tarwads (or joint families) with about two hundred members belonging to different branches and separated from one another by generations of descent, yet all able to trace their descent from one common ancestress. When a member belonging to

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10. Neither Christians nor Mohammedans are however considered to convey "atmospheric pollution". This is true even of converts from the lowest castes. An immense inducement is thus afforded to the depressed classes to raise themselves in the social scale by embracing Islam or Christianity. See Gazetteer of the Malabar District, p. 102.

11. Twenty-Seventh Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1866, p. 58.

12. Malabar and Its Folk by T. K. Gopal Panikkar, p. 14.

such a joint family embraced Christianity the penalties decreed by caste made it impossible for him to continue in their midst, and banished him at once from home and kindred. In no other way can we explain the bitter grief exhibited by the relatives of a convert, the attempts made to carry him away by force, or the equally malignant rancour with which they often persecuted converts who refused to retrace their steps.

Many examples might be quoted from mission reports published in the last century to illustrate the attitude taken up by the average Hindu family towards a member who intended to accept Christianity. The following extract with its grim humour will, however, be sufficient to give a picture of the frantic efforts which relations usually made to prevent an enquirer from taking the fateful step:—

“After having received baptismal instruction for a time Krishnan went to his home in July 1893 in order to let his wife, who was still living with her parents, share his happiness. But his relations got hold of him, abused him, declared him insane, tied his hands and feet, and had his whole body shaved, washed, anointed, and got him, as they thought, purified by mantras. By the advice of the family Brahman, the thousand-vessel-bath was tried on him. In immense copper vessels, on the fire of the sacred milk-wood, water was heated and four people were engaged in pouring it over his head. The weather was very cold and after 40 to 50 potfuls had been poured down on him, he began to feel a kind of torpidity and begged the people to desist; but they went quietly on till he was quite stiff, when at last his wife drove them away. By this bath he became so ill

with fever that he lost all his strength and lay very ill for several days. After he had got a little better, he was to be purified by the five products of the cow (milk, curds, ghee, urine and dung), and he was to be sent on a pilgrimage to sacred places and temples, such as Rameswara, Gokarna, etc. But before that all the misery and disgrace he would bring on himself and his family by his turning Christian were painted to him once more in the most dreadful colours. He was reminded of the fate of many of his acquaintances who had become Christians and had now to drag out their existence as outcasts, in mean situations, as servants of the missionaries, whereas, they might have lived among their own people in comfort and general esteem. How could he be so blind to his own advantages? But when he answered that he was seeking the highest honour and good—eternal bliss by faith in Christ—they grew angry and left him, inducing his brothers to persuade him to renounce all his claim to his family property, which in his weakness he did. With many tears and bitter grief he took leave of his wife and returned to Palghat, where he was carefully tended and nursed in a Christian family and further instructed in the faith. After an attempt to fetch his wife, who had sent him word that she was willing to join him, had proved a failure, he was baptized on the 19th November and received the name Albert.”<sup>13</sup>

The report does not indicate clearly what system of inheritance was followed by the family in question.

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13. Fifty-Fourth Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1893, p. 70.

As a rule till the Marumakkathayam Act of 1933 came into force it was impossible for a member converted from a Marumakkathayam joint family to obtain his share of the common property. For Act No. XXI (Removal of Caste Disabilities) of 1850 according to which a convert from Hinduism does not lose his claim to the family property on account of a change in his religion remained practically a dead letter in Malabar. In fact, the matter was once taken before a full bench of the High Court. According to the Full Bench decision <sup>14</sup> the effect of Act No. XXI of 1850 is not to enlarge the convert's interest in any property or to get rid of any condition or restriction to which it was originally subject. Conversion from Hinduism could not, therefore, give a member of a Marumakkathayam joint family the right to a partition of the tarwad property which was impartible under the Marumakkathayam law as it existed before 1933. All that the convert could claim was to continue to reside in the house and be maintained as before if the other members were willing to share his company, or to get separate residence and maintenance allowance allotted to him, if the other members refused to live with the convert. Even in the case of Hindu families which did not follow the Marumakkathayam system, the Mitakshara law was so modified by local custom and usage that it was very seldom a convert could get an adequate share of the joint property.

The opposition from the local janmi or landowner

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14. Pathumma V. Raman Nambiar, reported in 44 Madras, I. L. R. 891.

usually gave the finishing touch to the picture of a convert's helplessness. Thus, for example, Mr. Weismann of Chombala made repeated attempts to induce the Hindu landlords to allow converts to remain in their rented houses and compounds; but again and again his entreaties met with the depressing retort, "For those who forsake their ancestral caste and customs, we have neither house nor gardens."<sup>15</sup> Till the Madras Act No. I of 1900 (Malabar Compensation for Tenants' Improvements) came into effect tenants in Malabar were completely at the mercy of landlords. For, it was impossible for a tenant who was evicted, even to secure adequate compensation for the improvements he had made. After 1900, no doubt, the tenant enjoyed the right to claim compensation. Yet the landlord could evict him, though for a hundred generations or more the property might have been in the possession of his ancestors. Under these circumstances, how miserable life could be made for those who incurred the landlord's displeasure, especially when practically all land was privately owned as in Malabar, may well be imagined. Legal provision for security of tenure and fair rent did not make its appearance in Malabar till 1930.<sup>16</sup>

Through the narrow meshes of the social organization which enclosed and imprisoned Hindu society in Malabar the rich as well as the powerful must have found it hard to escape. The casual onlooker is, however, likely to consider the interstices sufficiently

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15. The Fifty-Seventh Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1896, p. 49.

16. See Chapter 1.



large for the slave caste. No doubt, those who did not possess could not be deprived. Yet the depressed classes in Malabar have been a source of so much profit to the wealthy landholders that as a class these aristocrats could never view with equanimity any movement which aimed at their liberation. Times are changing, and the dawn of a happier era seems to show its first streak. But the following incident will indicate how exciting and adventurous the outcaste's path to the Christian fold has sometimes proved to be.

"In June 1874 a Cheruman family consisting of 11 persons came to our outstation Wadakanchery. They were originally slaves of a rich landowner in the Cochin territory, whom they had left, as they alleged, on account of ill-treatment with the desire for bodily freedom and eternal salvation. When we were convinced of the truth of their statements, we could not but admit them as catechumens. For more than a month their former masters assisted by friends or police constables did all in their power to get hold of their persons. Flattery, promises, intimidation, bribing the catechist, waylaying were all tried in vain. But on Sunday, the 23rd August, one of the owners appeared in the company of some friends, a Cochin peon, and a British constable, serving warrants purporting to have been issued by the Cochin Government. Without regard to the protests of the catechist, ten persons were seized and first taken to the police station. After this, Antony, a Christian relative of the Cheruman, was kidnapped in the jungle. The slave owners intended to seize in like manner the catechist and two other Christians in Wadakanchery; but their plans got wind and were

frustrated. Mr. Knox, the Head Assistant Collector, and Mr. Porter, the Superintendent of Police did their best to bring the evil-doers before the bar of justice and to get back the kidnapped persons. These had been brought into the Cochin territory, where Antony and his brother-in-law were chained and put into prison. After a month one of the slave-owners took Antony from the prison and advised him to deny Christ and remain with him, when he would send for his wife and children, otherwise he would kill him wherever he might be. Antony rejected his advice, and, though very weak, made good his escape; we saw him in Palghat on the 1st October half-starved and broken in spirits.

"The Collector of Malabar and the British Resident of Cochin made unremitting efforts, and at last succeeded in having 6 of the kidnapped persons delivered up to the magistrate at Palghat. Four were said to be too sick to travel, but when the magistrate's dresser was sent, he found them in perfect health. So they too had to be given up. On the 4th January 1875 they were brought before the magistrate who told them they were free and might choose any abode they liked."<sup>17</sup>

Thus whether it was the oppressed Cheruma or the aristocratic Brahmin, to all conversion meant a break with their social and economic past. Banished from home and caste, deprived of any claim that they had to ancestral property, evicted from their lands and denied work by the landlords whom perhaps their forefathers had served for many generations, the early converts found themselves forsaken and helpless. The

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17. Thirty-Fifth Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1874, p. 21.

missionaries were compelled therefore to find a new home and new occupations for the converts. They bought land at convenient centres and established the Basel Mission Industries.<sup>18</sup> Thus, the Protestant Christian population on the plains of Malabar tended to congregate round weaving establishments or tile factories, and in mission compounds which provided the converts with quarters as well as cultivable land. Most of the educated people who could not find employment in the factories were absorbed in the educational and evangelistic departments of the mission.<sup>19</sup>

A new home and new occupations did not mark the full measure of the convert's separation from his natural environment. Conversion implied, moreover, a change in the system of ownership and inheritance. In every case, either by conscious choice or silent permission the Marumakkathayam system has given place to the Indian Succession Act. Conversion also brought about a revolution in the institution of marriage. Till the Madras Act No. XXII of 1933 was passed, according to the Marumakkathayam system marriage involved no responsibility towards wife and children.<sup>20</sup> To the Christian convert governed by the Indian Christian Marriage Act, on the other hand, marriage not only forms a sacrament indissoluble before death, but also entails legal responsibility for the welfare of his family. Of course, by these changes the early converts only anticipated a transition from matrilineal

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18. See Chapter XV.

19. The Fifty-Fifth Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1894, p. 48.

20. See Chapter I.

succession, joint family and free marriage to patrilineal succession, individualism, and more stable marriage contracts which have been gradually pervading Hindu society in Malabar.

Social life within the Malabar Church did not by any means serve to bridge the gulf which conversion had created. The organization of the Church had little in common with the Hindu social structure. After the break up of feudalism, caste in Malabar has been at its best a loose social organization, bound together by common traditions, but without a systematic hierarchy and exercising an uncertain control over the daily lives of its members.<sup>21</sup> On the contrary, the organization of the Church not only accustomed the converts to a new discipline, but endowed them with new privileges and responsibilities. For, with the passage of time the members of the Church obtained a larger share in its government, and were expected to contribute a larger amount for its expenses.<sup>22</sup> The social standards set by the Church were moreover calculated to banish from the convert's mind even a recollection of the past. No custom or observance which had the least association with the idea of caste was permitted in the Christian community.<sup>23</sup> Tufts and caste marks disappeared; peculiarities of food and dress gave way; and converts began to borrow more and more freely of European dress and European manners. Western music replaced Indian music;

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21. *ibid.*

22. See Chapter II.

23. Constitution and Rules of the Basel Mission Church in India (1902), Section 33.

western forms of worship replaced Indian forms; even the very dialect spoken by Christians acquired an outlandish colour. In fine, the Christian community in Malabar became an alien colony looking for protection and support upon missionary friends from the west.

Early missionaries hoped for the day when the Hindu community in Malabar would cease to disown Christian converts as they had done. It was the policy of the mission to do their best, in the meantime, to make of the Church a self-reliant and self-supporting society.<sup>24</sup> Certainly, the training given by the mission in their factories led to considerable dispersion of industrial knowledge, and created a few independent artisans as well as business men in the Church.<sup>25</sup> But the progress towards self-sufficiency remained slow (for reasons which will be examined later), and was suddenly upset by the great European War. With the outbreak of hostilities the Basel Mission Industries were taken over by the Custodian of Enemy Property;<sup>26</sup> funds available for evangelistic and educational work began to decrease;<sup>27</sup> the economic basis of the Church was shaken to its very foundations. How far the Basel Mission Church in Malabar has adjusted itself

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24. Forty-Ninth Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1883, p. 27.

25. eg. Both Aaron's Spinning and Weaving Mills at Pappinsherry and the Premier Hosiery Works at Calicut belonged to Christian families. Afterwards they were converted into Joint Stock Companies, but the Managing Directors are Christians.

26. Order No. 3349 of 22nd May 1919 made by the Governor-General in Council.

27. Minutes of the Malabar Church Council which met in August 1920, Speech by Dr. J. J. Banninga.



to the altered situation will be examined in subsequent chapters.

The isolation which the Malabar Church suffered in the land of its birth has not however been without its compensation. Wherever Hindus have moved *en masse* to the Christian fold, we find, they have borne caste prejudices with them. "On the whole," says Bishop Pickett, "the danger is most acute in the South, where certain sections of the Roman Catholics have permitted such extreme caste distinctions as the segregation of outcastes in Church services and the priority of higher-caste converts in receiving the sacrament of the Holy Communion."<sup>28</sup> On account of its isolation from the environment, the Basel Mission Church in Malabar has remained singularly free from this taint. Though drawn from many mutually exclusive castes in the most caste-ridden district in India, the members of the Church have been welded by common tribulation and a common faith into a homogeneous brotherhood.

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28. Christian Mass Movements in India by J. W. Pickett, p. 336.

## CHAPTER IV.

### Growth and Distribution of the Protestant Church in Malabar.

We saw that according to the last census (1931) Malabar contains a population of 3,533,944 inhabitants. Of these 65,894 or nearly 2% are Christians. Among the Christians in Malabar the majority, however, belong either to the Roman Catholic or the Syrian Church. In 1931 Protestants numbered 13,411 or about 20% of the Christian population.<sup>1</sup> Since the census of 1931 the number has of course increased. As far as one may calculate on the basis of figures collected from the different denominations, at present the organized congregations in Malabar excluding British Cochin contain 12,845 Protestant Christians.<sup>2</sup>

In the Basel Mission Church to which the bulk of the Protestant Christians belong an annual census has been taken almost from the inception of the society. The following figures taken from the reports published by the mission, and the census report will show at what rate the Basel Mission Church has expanded from the

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1 Census of India, Vol. 14, Part 2, p. 303.

2. According to the census of 1931 British Cochin contains 14,024 Christians out of a total population of 24,977. The exact number of Protestants there is not known. But including those in British Cochin the total number of Protestant Christians in Malabar will certainly exceed the figure for 1931.

middle of the last century.<sup>3</sup>

Year	Total membership of the Basel Mission Church.	Increase or Decrease per cent.	Percentage variation in the population of Malabar.	Percentage variation in the number of Christians in Malabar.
1851	600			
1861	1,365	+ 107		
1871	1,766	+ 29		
1881	2,494	+ 41		
1891	3,262	+ 31		
1901	5,996	+ 84	+ 6	+ 19
1911	7,282	+ 21	+ 8	+ 10
1921	7,021	— 4	+ 3	+ 3
1931	7,970	+ 14	+ 14	+ 21
1939	9,921	+ 24		

The above table brings certain remarkable features to our notice. From 1839 when the Basel Mission established its first outpost in Malabar down to 1891, was a period of steady expansion for the Church. The very high percentage of increase between 1851 and 1861, of course, must be accounted for, by the low figure with which the society started on its career. From 1891 to 1901, although the population of Malabar increased only by 6%, and the whole Christian community in the district by 19%, the Basel Mission Church showed a phenomenal growth of 84%. During the next ten years conditions in the Church seem to have returned to the normal. Bad days however began after 1911. During the second decade of this century,

3. A census of the Basel Mission Church was taken by the Church authorities themselves in 1921, and again in 1931. The membership figures for these two years are based, therefore, on the results of these enumerations. In all other cases the figures are taken from the reports on the annual census conducted by the Basel Mission. For percentage variations in the number of Christians in Malabar, see Census of India 1931, Vol. 14, Part I, pp. 49 & 331.

although the Christian population of Malabar kept pace with the growth in the general population, the Basel Mission Church revealed an actual decrease of 4%. In the third decade the Church, no doubt, grew. The rate of increase did not, however, keep pace with the rate in the total Christian community, although it was equal to the growth in the population as a whole. After 1931, the rate of increase in the Basel Mission Church seems to have gained considerable momentum. How far this rate is in advance of the general increase in population cannot be determined without knowing the exact rate at which the population of Malabar is now increasing.

It is not possible to assign a definite reason for the variations in the number of converts who have entered the Church from decade to decade. For, "the wind bloweth where it listeth," and the manner in which the spirit of God moves the human mind is incapable of ultimate analysis. Yet, without being presumptuous, one may legitimately enquire into the material circumstances and human agencies which might have helped or hindered the movement. The industrial establishments which the Basel Mission founded to relieve unemployment among converts who were compelled to leave their natural environment have been subjected to much criticism in this respect. The greater economic security which poor converts found within the Church is said to have attracted many who would not otherwise have come and lowered the spiritual level of the community.<sup>4</sup> How far the Basel Mission was aware of

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4. The Fifty-Third Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1892, p. 53.



this danger and what steps they took to mitigate its consequences will be evident from the following extract. Speaking about the spiritual movement which accounted for an increase of 81% in the membership of the Malabar Church in the last decade of the 19th century, the Mission Report for the year 1896 remarks,<sup>5</sup> "It is especially encouraging to observe that all our stations .....equally participated in this gracious blessing... The converts belong to different castes and occupations, and although the poor and despised are represented among them in large proportions, persons are not wanting, who by their origin, position and character, commanded the respect of their countrymen before their conversion.....The motives which actuated these enquirers are of different kinds and may vary in each individual case according to the character, the peculiar condition, and the spiritual understanding of the person concerned. It cannot be denied, nor is it surprising, that in a movement like this taking hold of wide circles, many would come with very indistinct ideas about Christianity and its blessings; they are, as it were, carried away with the general current of feeling of dissatisfaction with the present state of things and of aspirations after something better than Hinduism with its idolatry and social customs can afford. There are many and especially among the poor and down-trodden, who may have at first expected that all their miseries would be put an end to, by embracing Christianity. But it should not be forgotten that many of the evils, these people are suffering from, are in fact the direct

5. The Fifty-Seventh Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1896, P. 44.

AGRICULTURE



fruit of heathenism, and that they are fully justified in expecting to find a remedy for these in the Church of Christ. It is often not easy to decide, whether people of this kind should be accepted or refused. There are, of course, cases in which the worldly-mindedness of an enquirer is so conspicuous and so unblushingly pronounced, that there can be no doubt about his unworthiness. But in many other cases it is almost impossible at once to say whether the motive underlying one's desire to be admitted as an enquirer is on the side of the temporal rather than the spiritual. To refuse admission to such persons would in many cases be hardly short of an act of recklessness and cruelty, compelling them to live a life of extreme misery or to become victims to Mohammedanism. The safest, and as we believe, the most Christ-like way in such cases is to have compassion on the poor,—poor both materially and spiritually,—by giving them a trial, and doing one's best by careful instruction to rouse the dormant spiritual faculties in them, and to gradually raise them from their low level up to an understanding of the spiritual truths of Christianity. As a matter of experience, the patient work of love thus spent on enquirers has in many cases proved successful, and by the grace of God made them good Christians."

In spite of the best intentions, however, mistakes were sometimes made. But the problem did not assume in Malabar the magnitude which it acquired on the mission field in South Mahratta during the great famine. From 1876 to 1878 when the whole of South India was stricken with terrible famine, Malabar, no doubt, suffered far less than other parts of the Presidency.<sup>6</sup>

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6. Gazetteer of the Malabar District, p. 272.

Yet, Malabar also did suffer, and large sums were expended by the Basel Mission for the relief both of Christians and non-Christians alike.<sup>7</sup> The number of conversions however did not show any extraordinary change in Malabar. In South Mahratta, on the other hand, conversions suddenly increased from 6 in 1875 to 627 in 1878.<sup>8</sup> Although the Malabar Church has never been disturbed by a perceptible influx of "famine Christians," orphanages maintained by the mission have added a few "famine orphans" to the Christian community. The following account will give an idea of how these unfortunate children arrived at the orphanages and what policy was followed by the mission in their case :<sup>9</sup>

"In July 1878 a Hindu, himself starving, brought us his child of 5 years of age, which was almost dead from starvation. What a sight this child was! From head to foot it was covered with itch and so thin that its neck was scarcely able to hold up its big head, and its big eyes without lustre. For 24 hours no food had passed the child's lips, and it was clear that for nine days the process of starving had been going on. One of the elder girls of our orphanage took charge of the child, and cared for it with great tenderness, although to touch and handle it at first caused some shrinking, notwithstanding the pity she felt. But soon the child

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7. Thirty-Ninth Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1878, p. 23.
  8. Reports of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the years 1875 and 1878, *Census of the Mission*.
  9. Thirty-Ninth Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1878, p. 44.

picked up again, and any one seeing the lively happy child now, would find it almost impossible to recognise the picture of wretchedness it had been at first. A few days later the same man brought a girl of 7 years old, asking us to receive her. She also looked the very picture of misery, although not quite as much as her younger sister. Again a month later the father of the two children came and offered a third child, a boy of 13 years. He had first, it seems, brought one child to see how it would be treated, before giving over three of them. But what was our astonishment when one day the mother made her appearance asking to see the children. She had been laid up with small-pox in her village 50 miles off, and to cause her husband to return, word had been sent him that she was dead. But this caused the husband to give over the children to us. Now the woman was lost in grief that their children had been brought to us, and it was only the report of the condition the children had been in and the care which had been bestowed on them that calmed her by and by. At last she made up her mind to stay in Calicut with her husband, and join the Christians herself.

“Another child of 7 years had lost her parents and all her relatives, and went from house to house begging for food. For some months, she found refuge with a Hindu family, but was sent away again when the famine increased. A Mopla brought her in his boat near to Calicut and left her there. Wandering about on the sea-shore, she reached the house of a poor Christian woman, and as she had found some fish, she asked the woman to roast them for her. The woman had pity on her, kept her for the night, and next morning brought her to us.

"Such children, of course, could not be sent away and gradually the numbers increased to thirty (at Calicut). Most of them had for some weeks to be nursed as carefully as babies, as the constitution was utterly ruined. ....Afterwards many children were given over to private families.

"It is quite a matter of course with us, that all these children are instructed in the fear of God and are led to Christ. But with respect to baptism, it is administered only to those who are *bona fide* made over to us, and of whom we know that they will not be claimed again by their relatives. If these children are above 8 years of age, they are baptised only after careful instruction and on the condition of good behaviour and a desire to be Christians; whilst children below 8 years are given over to Christ in baptism, without previous instruction, on the principle of infant baptism. Altogether the fear that children would be forced to become Christians (which was expressed somewhere) is quite unfounded. Thus the greater part of these children have been baptised in the course of the last year..... Those who for some reasons could not be admitted to baptism were very sorry for it."

Famines, though less severe, visited Malabar in 1866 and 1899 as well. But none of them seem to have exercised any extraordinary influence upon the number of converts who entered the Church from year to year. Yet in normal times the Malabar Church received a fair proportion of converts from the very poorest classes, some of whom embraced Christianity with the main purpose of improving their economic situation. The efforts that were made by the Basel Mission



to provide steady employment to converts and the rate of wages paid in the mission factories attracted to the Church many who afterwards proved to be a source of considerable anxiety. For example the starting of a tile factory at Codacal in 1890 led to 153 conversions.<sup>10</sup> Commenting upon the unsatisfactory progress shown by some of the families the report for 1904 remarks,<sup>11</sup> "The fact is that many joined the Church for the sake of earning a livelihood, and not for the sake of Christ and his religion." Authorities realized that the moral level of the Church and its reputation before the non-Christian world would be seriously endangered by such admissions. Greater discretion therefore came to be exercised and we find that in 1908 admission was refused to many pretending enquirers at Calicut.<sup>12</sup> Later on the Great War put an end to the industrial department connected with the mission. At present the mission only provides cultivable land for converts who need it in the new stations at Madai and Mattul. It is not necessary to add that the same caution ought to be exercised in the provision of cultivable land as in supplying converts with industrial employment.

The decrease in population from 1911 to 1921 reflects the extent to which the economic basis of the Malabar Church was shaken by the Great War.<sup>13</sup> In

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10. The Fifty-Second Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1891, p. 18.
  11. The Sixty-Fifth Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1904, p. 51.
  12. The Sixty-Ninth Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1908, p. 56.
  13. See Chapter III.



fact, the decline in population did not begin till 1914. For the census of 1914 showed<sup>14</sup> a population of 7594 as against 7282 in 1911. From 1914 to 1921 the population of the Basel Mission Church in Malabar declined by 573 souls. Records maintained in the different congregations do not show an excess of deaths over births in this period. On the other hand, births seem to have exceeded deaths by about 236. Besides, about 167 converts were also admitted into the Church. Putting these figures together, the population of the Basel Mission Church at the end of the second decade ought to have been 7997 souls. Actually, however, the Church contained only 7021 members. It is obvious therefore that between 1914 and 1921 about 976 members must have left the jurisdiction of the Basel Mission Church in order to improve their material circumstances.

Emigration was not unknown to the Basel Mission Church in Malabar before the second decade of this century. From the yearly census taken by the mission, we find that almost every year during the first decade a few people emigrated from the Church, making up a total of 668 souls in ten years. Although no systematic attempt was made by the community at the beginning to watch the movements of the emigrants, or to enquire after their welfare, the problem seems to have attracted attention on the eve of the Great War. Thus the report for the year 1912 remarks,<sup>15</sup> "Quite a consider-

14. The Seventy-Fourth Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1913, Tabular view of Churches on 1st January, 1914.

15. The Seventy-Third Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1912, p. 31.

able number of young men have gone to Bombay, some of them because they could not find suitable work in our districts, and others because they could not find the particular work they desired.....Others have listened to the advice of emigration agents and gone as far as Penang and even to Fiji in order to take up work in the sugar, tea, and rubber plantations of those countries.....The pastoral care for these emigrated Church members has become a real problem to us. While gratefully acknowledging the services of some of our brethren in Bombay, especially the services rendered to our people by some members of the Methodist Episcopal Mission, we yet feel that something more systematic should be done in looking after these young people in their lodgings and among their surroundings. But even more complex is the question of ministering to the spiritual wants of those who have taken up work in the tea and rubber estates of the Ghats, or in the districts beyond the sea. This question has also occupied the attention of the Synod of the Malabar Church and they have resolved to send for the present a monthly pastoral letter to all the emigrants whose addresses can be obtained." The report for the next year remarks that the undertaking, so far as it went, proved to be a success and the circular letters were appreciated.<sup>16</sup> The Great War, however, brought these endeavours to an untimely end. The attention of the Malabar Church does not seem to have been again directed to this matter till 1931, when the Church Council passed a resolution declaring

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16. The Seventy-Fourth Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1913, p. 28.

that something ought to be done to maintain the community's relationship with the members who had settled down in Madras.<sup>17</sup> Unfortunately this resolution was shelved.

After 1921 we find a steady decrease in the number of emigrants leaving the Malabar Church. The total number of those who left between 1921 and 1931 was only about 375 against 668 in the first decade, and 1087 in the second decade of this century. From 1931 to 1939 only 207 members emigrated from the Church, while the number of those who returned to the Church from outside amounted to 611.<sup>18</sup> The majority of emigrants came back in the years 1933, 1934 and 1935 to the congregations at Cannanore and Calicut. At the present time people who have emigrated from the Basel Mission Church in Malabar may be found in the neighbouring districts and states, in industrial centres like Coimbatore, Madras, Bombay, Calcutta, Bangalore and Madura, as well as in foreign countries like the Straits Settlements, Burma, Ceylon, Africa, Persia, and the East Indies.<sup>19</sup> Available statistics do not enable

17. Minutes of the Malabar Church Council which met in August 1931, p. 14.
18. The annual census taken by the mission gives the number of departures from each congregation and arrivals from other stations. The excess of departures over arrivals at all the stations together indicates the number leaving the Malabar Church. The excess of arrivals over departures at all the stations together indicates either the number of emigrants returning or the number of non-Malayalees coming. Among 8239 individuals surveyed, however, only 227 non-Malayalees were found.
19. In answer to question 15 in the general questionnaire the largest number of relatives outside Malabar were mentioned to be at Madras, Bombay, Bangalore, Coimbatore, Penang, Mangalore, Burma, Mysore, Singapore, Calcutta and Salem.

one to calculate the proportion between the sexes among those leaving the Church. One may, however, judge from the small difference between the number of married men and married women in the Church that emigrants who have left behind their families must be very few.<sup>20</sup>

We saw that in the third decade of this century the Basel Mission Church increased by 14%, thus keeping pace with the growth in the population of Malabar. The increase in the Basel Mission Church, however, includes all the fresh converts who joined the community. Although there are certain gaps in the statistics of births and deaths for this period which clergymen have supplied from Church records one may reasonably conclude on the strength of available figures that the natural increase of the Church could not have been above 11%.<sup>21</sup> But from 1931 onwards the rate of natural increase has shown considerable improvement. The natural increase of the Basel Mission Church in Malabar during the last few years (1931—1939) works out at the rate of 15%. Although this figure does not vary much from the rate at which the population of Malabar increased during the previous decade, a close examination will reveal vast differences in fecundity and length of life between the Christian community and the general population.

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20. See Chapter V.

21. According to statistics collected from Church records there were 2168 births and 1429 deaths from 1920 to 1930. The death statistics of Vaniyankulam and Parapperi are not however complete.

## BIRTH AND DEATH RATES

	Average for 1902 to 1912.			Average for 1930 to 1938.		
	Birth rate per mille.	Death rate per mille.	Survival rate per mille.	Birth rate per mille.	Death rate per mille.	Survival rate per mille.
Basel Mission Church, Malabar	36.5	25.3	11.2	27.3	16.9	10.4
Indian Chris- tians in the Pre- sidency ...	...	...	...	33.5	19.3	14.2
Malabar ...	34.7	27.0	7.7	37.3	21.6	15.7
Madras Presidency ...	...	...	...	35.8	22.8	13.0

The above table<sup>22</sup> shows that during the last forty years well-marked changes have taken place in the trend of vital statistics in the Basel Mission Church. With a birth rate above the district average and a death rate below it, the Church multiplied faster than the general population during the first decade of this century. At the present time, the death rate in the Church has come down yet lower by many points. The birth rate however has failed to maintain its former level. In comparison with the Indian Christian

22. Birth and death rates in the Basel Mission Church are calculated from statistics collected by the mission at the annual census. The figures for Indian Christians, Malabar and the Madras Presidency for 1930 to 1938 are calculated from statistics published in the annual reports of the Director of Public Health, Madras, for the corresponding years. The figures for Malabar for 1902 to 1912 are calculated from statistics published in the Gazetteer of the Malabar District, Vol. II, 1915 edition, p. 19.



community in the province, the population of Malabar, and the population of the Presidency as a whole, therefore, the Basel Mission Church has to-day the lowest birth rate, the lowest death rate, and the lowest survival rate. In a country like India, which has been flooded by a devastating torrent of children from year to year, a birth rate so low as 27.3 is certainly remarkable. The propaganda that has been carried on in this Presidency during the last few years for artificial birth control does not however seem to have any connection with this tendency in the Basel Mission Church. On the other hand, the number of widows, bachelors and spinsters in the community<sup>23</sup> as well as the late age at which marriage usually takes place must be held responsible for the lower birth rate. Thus for example there were 86 first marriages from 1933 to 1938 at Calicut. The average age of the bride in these marriages works out at 21 years and the average age of the bride-groom at 27. The corresponding figures for the bride and bride-groom from 1900 to 1905 were 18 and 25. A growing standard of life and harder struggle for existence must have contributed to raise the average age of marriage. Although the lower birth rate which has resulted from these circumstances may not be undesirable in itself, the manner in which it has been brought about leaves much to be desired. For enforced abstinence finding expression in very late marriages, life-long maidenhood or a large proportion of widows in the community bereaves many a home of contentment and happiness.

Although the death rate is comparatively low in the

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23. See Chapter V.

Malabar Church, and stands considerably below the level which obtained from 1902 to 1912, statistics of mortality reveal certain disquieting features. First the percentage of deaths due to consumption stands extraordinarily high. Separate entries for death by consumption are made only in certain municipalities of this Presidency. But during the last four years (1935—1938), for which percentage figures are given in the provincial health reports, the rate has never risen above 7% of the total deaths in those municipalities. In the Basel Mission Church, on the other hand, consumption accounts for 14% of the total deaths during the last eight years (1931—1938).<sup>24</sup> The percentage of deaths due to consumption is specially high at Cannanore where it has soared up to 17% of the total deaths. Probably the real state at Cannanore is worse than this figure would seem to indicate. For, in the burial register kept in this congregation, weakness is assigned as the cause of many deaths. In all likelihood some at least of these deaths would have gone to the column for tuberculosis, if a more accurate or less euphemistic nomenclature had been adopted by the clergymen in charge. Overwork, insufficient income, ill-balanced diet, insanitary dwellings, improper treatment, failure to take proper precautions against infection, and above all, unwholesome conditions within factories seem to have contributed in varying measure to produce this gloomy picture.<sup>25</sup>

Secondly the two new stations at Madai and Mattul,

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24. See Appendix No. 8.

25. See Chapter X.

where the converts have come mostly from the depressed classes, show a death rate far in excess of the rate obtaining in the whole Church.<sup>26</sup> The clergymen in charge of these congregations especially mention the havoc wrought by venereal disease among their flock. Considering the state of economic servitude and social bondage from which these unfortunate brethren have come, perhaps these conditions are not surprising.<sup>27</sup> Even with the best of care, these infant communities will evidently need time to catch up the record of health which older centres have established.

In spite of the disquieting features referred to above, the general health of the Basel Mission Church must be considered commendable in many respects. Both infant mortality and deaths due to fever accounted for proportionately far fewer lives in the Malabar Church than in the Presidency as a whole.<sup>28</sup> The proportion of female deaths to male deaths between the ages of 20 and 40 also has revealed considerable improvement in the Church. Owing to the greater risk to which expectant mothers are exposed in a country where maternity and child-welfare work has yet to make headway, the number of female deaths in the

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26. The average death rate at Madai from 1932 to 1938 works out at 21 per mille; the average death rate at Mattul from 1935 to 1938 works out at the rate of 54 per mille.

27. See Chapter IX.

28. Making full allowance for the gaps in the statistics of death by age the average rate of infant mortality in the Church from 1930 to 1938 could not have been above 110 per 1000 live births. During the same period the average rate remained at 178 deaths per 1000 live births in the Presidency as a whole. See Report of the Director of Public Health, Madras, for 1938, p. 9.

prime of life usually remains far in excess of male deaths during the same period. It is indeed creditable to the Basel Mission Church in Malabar that although special hospitals for the benefit of the community are nowhere in existence to-day, the death rate among women during the most fatal part of their lives has shown a very decided fall.<sup>29</sup>

The low survival rate which obtains in the Basel Mission Church has its advantages as well as disadvantages. At a time when the franchise is extending numerical strength no doubt brings political power. And a community which increases slowly tends to be swamped by more prolific sections of the electorate. From the social and economic point of view, however, it is essential that the rate of increase should never exceed the material resources of the community. People who propagate themselves without any reference to their material resources travel straight towards economic ruin and social decay. If the vicissitudes through which the Malabar Church has passed during the last two decades have not shaken its economic structure and arrested the growth in the standard of life more than they have done the credit must be assigned largely to the low rate of increase which the community has maintained.

Although the total membership of the Basel Mission Church has increased since 1921, some parishes

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29. In 1938 female deaths in the Madras Presidency between the ages of 20 and 40 exceeded male deaths by a little over  $\frac{1}{4}$ . In the Basel Mission Church from 1930 to 1938 female deaths during the same age period exceeded male deaths only by about  $\frac{1}{5}$ .



show an actual decrease. The following table containing a list of all the stations included in the Basel Mission Church indicates how the strength of the different congregations has varied during the last two decades:—

No	Stations.	Outstations	Number of Members in		
			1921	1931	1939
1	Madai	... ..	...	117	183
2	Mattul	Matakkara	...	...	183
3	Pappinisherri	Taliparamba, Kolappuram, Payyanur...	169	215	314
4	Cannanore	...	1133	1080	1370
5	Chowa	...	414	194	371
6	Nettur	Kuthuparamba, Anjara- kandy, Mamparam, Panur	390	368	565
7	Tellicherry	...	145	164	198
8	Chombala	Badagara, Moorat	436	397	412
9	Calicut	Annasserry	1301	2052	2729
10	Quilandy	...	140	126	51
11	Puthiyara	Chevayur	594	696	652
12	Feroke	Parappanangadi	199	282	264
13	Manjeri	Nilambur	88	131	116
14	Codacal	...	818	722	780
15	Parapperi	Ponnani, Tanur	236	256	327
16	Chalissery	Chittatukara, Mullasserry, Manathala, Trithala...	188	200	185
17	Vaniankulam	Shoranur, Ottapalam, Trikaderi, Perintal- manna, Mankara, Pattambi, Mannarghat.	238	231	422
18	Palghat	Vadakancherry, Kollangode, Panayur...	173	294	383
19	Melparamba	Olavacode	359	445	409
Total...			7021	7970	9921

The reasons for the slow increase in the membership



of the Church from 1921 to 1931 have already been examined.<sup>30</sup> Cannanore, Chowa, Nettur, Chombala, Quilandy, Codacal, and Vaniyankulam registered a fall in membership during this period. Even after 1931 Chowa, Chombala, Quilandy, and Codacal have failed to regain their former strength in numbers. Moreover Puthiyara, Feroke, and Chalissery have now started on a retrograde movement. Internal dissensions and protracted litigation have been responsible for the condition of Chowa.<sup>31</sup> Chombala has suffered, because a weaving establishment in which many of the families formerly found employment was abolished by the Commonwealth Trust when they took over the Basel Mission Industries. The closing of a middle school by the mission was largely responsible for the change at Quilandy. The fortunes of the local tile factories are reflected in the fluctuations at Puthiyara, Feroke, and Codacal. The rise of a large cotton mill at Pappinisherry under the management of a Christian family explains the phenomenal increase in the membership of the local Church. Many unemployed families from other stations have moved on to Pappinisherry, Calicut and Cannanore for work.

Thus the membership of the Basel Mission Church in Malabar even to-day remains concentrated at about fifty centres the majority of which are numerically insignificant. If Protestantism should take root in

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30. For administrative purposes Chowa, Quilandy, and Manjeri are now considered as out-stations. The membership of the other out-stations varies from 5 to 95.

31. See Chapter II.

rural Malabar, the Church must make it a major concern to strengthen the economic basis of these outposts. Instead of playing the part of recruiting stations from which the enquirers pass on to the larger congregations in towns or near factories, these lonely outposts must themselves expand into self-contained rural communities. The growth of such communities at Manjeri, Perintalmanna and Madai indeed holds out great promise for the future. With the dawn of enlightenment the Hindu community by which the Church is surrounded has begun to revise the traditional attitude of uncompromising hostility to the convert. The hour has indeed struck for a definite break with the policy of isolation.

The Indian pastorate in Calicut connected with the S. P. G., and the C. M. S. Church in Wynaad consist mostly of a floating population. There are about 580 members in the S. P. G. congregation at Calicut. The majority of them have come from Travancore and Cochin as government servants, clerks in commercial establishments, or as business-men and are not expected to make a permanent home in the town.<sup>32</sup> Similarly 1684 Protestant Christians are found to reside on the estates in Wynaad. But among these only 515 are from the hill-tribes inhabiting this area. The rest have emigrated from Coimbatore, Travancore, Tinnevely, Cochin, Mysore, South Canara, Trichinopoly, and

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32. Questionnaire kindly answered by Rev. N. I. Ignatius, B. A., Pastor, Indian Congregation, St. Mary's Church, Calicut.

Madura for work on the plantations.<sup>33</sup> The members of the S. P. G. congregation at Calicut, and the C. M. S. congregation in Wynaad naturally belong to many different denominations. But they worship happily together and give a practical example of reunion.

Sectarians numbering about 518 in all are found mostly at Calicut and Cannanore.<sup>34</sup> They belong to six different sects and have secured most of their adherents from the Basel Mission Church.

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33. Questionnaires kindly answered by Rev. A. Isaac, and Rev. J. Joseph C. M. S. Pastors, Wynaad.

34. Sectarians are distributed as follows:—

	Calicut.	Cannanore.
1. Church of Christ ...	20	nil
2. Jehovah Mandiram ...	42	nil
3. Christian Triumph Company ...	53	nil
4. Church of God (American) ...	74	37
5. Indian Pentecostal Church ...	90	nil
6. Brother Mission ...	142	60

## CHAPTER V

### Age, Sex, Civil condition and Eugenics.

In an Indian census there are few questions to which an enumerator gets more unsatisfactory answers than the question concerning age. Thus the superintendent of census operations in Madras (1931) gives the example of a villager whose first answer about his age was "God knows". When it was put to him that as a point of honour he should have his age determined, he himself joined enthusiastically in the hunt. The village officers and half the village took part also. But the man himself finally provided a clue. After much thought he came out with the information that his mother had always told him he was born in a cyclone which had caused great destruction of trees in that neighbourhood. A chorus of voices corroborated that such a storm had indeed visited those parts about 50 years before. And the year was finally settled with the help of the tahsildar.<sup>1</sup>

We have a different tale to tell about the members of the Basel Mission Church in Malabar. Very few of those whom we approached were unable to give their age definitely. On the other hand many could state even their date of birth without difficulty. Literacy and education do not form the only factors which have contributed to this end.<sup>2</sup> Some of the social customs

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(1) Census of India (1931), Vol. XIV, part I, p. 99.

(2) See Chapter VI.

in the community have helped to remind every member of his age at frequent intervals and thus saved him from forgetting it. Apart from such occasions as confirmation, marriage and elections to the presbytery when one's age is considered, the pastor sends birthday greetings annually to every member in his congregation. And it is the custom for most members to make a thank offering to God on his birth-day or the Sunday following. The age statistics collected in this survey must therefore be considered to present a high standard of accuracy. It was only in the case of certain old maids who were unwilling to relinquish their claims to youth and matrimony that we had reason to suspect the age people gave.

The age distribution of a community is of interest specially from two stand-points. First a study of age distribution enables the student to perceive the proportion of people capable of working. For in any society the effective population usually belongs to the age group 15 to 50. The non-working population below 15 and above 50 depend largely upon the middle group for their sustenance. The economic strength of a community will therefore be circumscribed by the relative size of its effective population.

Secondly a study of age distribution enables the student to perceive the general trend in the development of population. As Sundbarg, the great demographer pointed out with reference to western countries, where the population is growing the number in the age group '0 to 15' is much greater than in the age group '50 and over'; where the population is stationary



the numbers in the two groups approach equality ; where the population is declining the age group '50 and over' tends to be more numerous than the age group '0 to 15'. Thus Sundbarg divided populations into three types : progressive, stationary and regressive, if they conformed to the following age-categories :—<sup>3</sup>

Type.	Percentage of the population in the different age-periods.		
	0—15	15—50	50 & over.
Progressive.	40	50	10
Stationary.	33	50	17
Regressive.	20	50	30

The Basel Mission Church in Malabar forms too small a community to be compared with any of the populations mentioned by demographers. Yet the principles that govern the growth and decay of large populations cannot be without their significance for small groups, especially when these groups have an individuality and independent existence like the Basel Mission Church. It will be evident from the accompanying table<sup>4</sup> that the age distribution of the Basel

(3) Modern Review, January 1940, article on "Are the Bengalee Hindus Decadent" by Jatindra Mohan Datta.

(4) Census of India (1931), Vol XIV, part I, pp. 103 & 109, and part III, p. 30.

	Percentage of people aged 0—15	Percentage of people aged 15—50	Percentage of people aged 50 & over.
Basel Mission Church, Malabar.	36	51	13
Malabar District.	40	50	10
Madras Presidency.	39	50	11
Christians in the Presidency.	40	50	10
England & Wales (1921)	28	53	19
Muslims in the Presidency.	42	49	9
Hindus in the Presidency.	39	50	11

Mission Church differs materially from the age distribution of the people in Malabar, and in the whole Presidency. In comparison with the district or the province in which the congregations are situated the Basel Mission Church shows a lower percentage in the first age group, and a higher percentage in the last. These peculiarities are quite in accordance with the vital statistics which were examined in the last chapter. A birth rate far lower than what obtains outside the Church either in Malabar or the Presidency accounts for the smaller percentage of members who come under the age group, '0-15'. Similarly a death rate far lower than what obtains outside the Church either in Malabar or the Presidency accounts for the higher percentage of members who come under the age group '50 and over'. The proportion of the effective population in the Church

stands slightly higher than outside. According to Sundbarg's classification the Basel Mission Church may therefore be considered as belonging to the progressive type. As statistics of age are not available for any previous period it is impossible to say whether the age distribution of the Church has undergone any change in the past. But on the whole the age distribution of the Church seems to be gradually moving towards western standards.

The disparity in age distribution between the Basel Mission Church and the Christian Community in the province needs an explanation. According to the Sundbarg scale the Muslims and Christians in the Presidency are more progressive than the Hindus. The Superintendent of census operations in Madras (1931) attributes the higher juvenile ratio among Muslims and Christians to selective conversion.<sup>5</sup> For these communities have both admitted a larger proportion from the lower and more fertile strata of the population. Their conversions are mainly from the depressed classes whose greater fertility feeds the new community instead of the old. The Basel Mission Church in Malabar has of course admitted converts from the depressed classes in large numbers. But it will be inaccurate to say that the Malabar Church has been formed mainly of adherents from this community.<sup>6</sup> Besides among converts admitted into the Church the proportion of

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(5) Census of India (1931), Vol XIV, Part I, p. 326.

(6) Of the 505 converts who were admitted into the Church from 1900 to 1905, family registers give the caste from which 425 came. Among these 425 we find only about 7% belonged to the Depressed Classes. The proportion of

juveniles has usually been less than in the population of Malabar.<sup>7</sup> Thus the lower fecundity of some castes from which converts were drawn, and the smaller percentage of juveniles among the converts have served to magnify the effect of late marriages referred to in the last chapter, and reduce the proportion of young persons in the Basel Mission Church.

Unlike age distribution the sex ratio in the Basel Mission Church seems at first to offer no difficulties.

	Females per 1000 males. <sup>8</sup>	Conditions within the church seem to be a trifle better than among the general population of Malabar. Owing to regular emigra- tion--the West Coast supplies clerks, cooks and restaura- teurs to the whole of South India--Mala- bar shows a consider-
Basel Mission Church, Malabar.	1051	
Malabar District.	1059	
Madras Presidency.	1025	
Christians in the Presidency.	1020	
Muslims in the Presidency.	1026	
Hindus in the Presidency.	1026	

converts coming from the Depressed Classes has however undergone a remarkable change in recent times. Of the 722 converts who were admitted into the Church from 1933 to 1938 it was possible to ascertain the caste only of 581. Among these 581 however 63% belonged to the Depressed Classes.

- (7) From 1900 to 1905 only 32% of the converts were juveniles; from 1933 to 1938 the proportion rose to 36%. Yet it was below the proportion of juveniles (40%) in Malabar.
- (8) Census of India (1931), Vol. XIV, Part I, pp. 133 & 149. The figure for the Basel Mission Church is of course calculated from answers to the general questionnaire.

able excess in the female population. In a protected community like the Basel Mission Church one may naturally expect the currents which sway the general population to flow with diminished force. A female excess below the district rate may therefore be accepted as a matter of course. A closer examination however reveals certain disquieting features in the situation.

Differential birth-rates, differential death-rates, emigration and fresh conversions form the four chief factors which influence the sex ratio in the Church. Although available statistics of birth and death are not complete enough to calculate the exact difference in in birth and death rates between the sexes, they indicate very clearly that in the Basel Mission Church, as in the whole Presidency, the male birth-rate is higher than the female birth-rate;<sup>9</sup> but strangely enough the female death-rate exceeds the male death-rate almost at all age periods.<sup>10</sup> The natural development of the Basel Mission Church ought to produce therefore an excess of males rather than females.

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(9) See Appendix No. 9 for statistics.

(10) It has not been possible to give any satisfactory explanation of this phenomenon. For statistics see Appendix No. 10.



Basel Mission Church—Sex Distribution  
per 1000 of the Population.

Age	Male	Female.
1—10	130	116
10—20	107	113
20—30	82	90
30—40	66	69
40—50	43	55
50—60	35	39
60—70	17	21
70 & over.	8	9
Total	488	512

Emigration is not the only factor counteracting this tendency.<sup>11</sup> Since 1910 there has generally been a very perceptible excess in the proportion of female converts admitted into the Church. From 1933 to 1938 for example 223 adult female converts were admitted into the

Church against 189 adult male converts.<sup>12</sup> In a district which has been noted for its orthodoxy such forwardness among females must be considered unusual. Enquiries show that the excess of adult female converts is largely made up of women who have separated from their husbands or had questionable adventures in love. Responsible people have expressed grave misgivings at the turn that conversions have taken during the last three decades. If the new entrants are real converts of course no Christian can have any valid objection to welcoming them. But if these conversions only imply that the Church is offering an asylum to women who have been disappointed in the most intimate relationships of life and have lost home or reputation, pastors will only be endangering the moral and economic future of the community by admitting them.

(11) See Chapter IV.

(12) These figures are based on the annual census taken by the Basel Mission.

Those who think lightly of conversions which tend to upset the equilibrium between the sexes in the Basel Mission Church have only to examine the accompanying table to perceive how very deplorable the civil condition of the community has already become.

Basel Mission Church, Malabar.						
Age group.	Percentage of					
	Married Men.	Married Women.	Widowers.	Widows.	Bachelors.	Spinsters.
1—10	—	—	—	—	100	100
10—20	—	6	—	—	100	94
20—30	24	58	1	5	75	37
30—40	77	71	4	15	19	14
40—50	92	63	5	28	3	9
50—60	87	40	10	54	3	6
60—70	79	23	21	73	—	4
70 & over	71	7	28	90	1	3

The percentage of widows, bachelors, and spinsters in the Church stands alarmingly high. Fortynine per cent of all women aged 40 & above have lost their husbands. Although compared with European standards this percentage is extraordinarily high,<sup>13</sup> the Church may of course take some comfort in thinking that the figure is much lower than the percentage for the whole Presidency.<sup>14</sup> For though the custom of seeking wives who are much younger than themselves is almost as common within the Church as without, its consequences are mitigated by the absence of any restrictions on widow re-marriage. By marrying girls far below them

(13) In England and Wales the percentage of widows aged 40 and over was 21.7 in 1921. See Census of India (1931), Vol. XIV, Part I, p. 156.

(14) According to the census of 1931 it is 61.8%. *ibid.*

in age men try to make sure that their partners will not be too old and decrepit when they themselves are in need of careful nursing. The custom, however, must be considered unfair to the womenfolk who are thereby compelled to spend a large part of their lives in widowhood.

The percentage of bachelors in the Basel Mission Church stands no doubt above the percentage for the Presidency, and for the whole Christian Community in Madras.<sup>15</sup> But it shows nothing like the excess we find in the proportion of spinsters. The percentage of unmarried women in the Basel Mission Church exceeds the percentage for the Madras Presidency, the Christian community in the province and even a western country like England<sup>16</sup>. Apart from the excess of females in the Church there are three other factors which contribute to perpetuate this unfortunate situation. Generally

- (15) The percentage of unmarried males aged 20 and above in the different sections of the population works out as follows :—

Presidency	26.5	per cent
Hindus in the Province	26.2	... ..
Muslims     "     "	29.9	... ..
Christians   "     "	28.7	... ..
Basel Mission Church	30.0	... ..

See census of India (1931), Vol. XIV, Part I, p. 163.

- (16) The percentage of unmarried females in the different sections of the population works out as follows :—

Madras Presidency	38	per cent
Hindus in the province	37	... ..
Muslims     "     "	43	... ..
Christians   "     "	45	... ..
England & Wales (1921)	50	... ..
Basel Mission Church	53	... ..

See Census of India (1931), Vol. XIV, Part I, pp. 156 and 163.

speaking conversion has been accompanied by a rise in the standard of life.<sup>17</sup> Before the Great War economic conditions within the Church were favourable enough for the maintenance of this high standard. The changes which followed the war shook the economic foundations of the Church as nothing else had ever done before. During the last two decades the process of readjustment has been steadily proceeding. But even now many young men find it difficult to maintain the standard to which previous generations were accustomed, and therefore remain unmarried. Economic difficulties are not, however, confined to the Christian community in Malabar. The custom of married sons living with parents who look upon it as a privilege to have the daughters-in-law under their roof has however prevented economic difficulties from becoming an obstacle to timely marriage outside the Basel Mission Church. In these cases the parents or brothers who are employed may not only meet the expenses of the marriage, but will even maintain the married couple till the bridegroom is able to earn his livelihood. Among Basel Mission Christians on the other hand after marriage a young man leaves his father's roof and sets up a home for himself. Naturally he has to wait till he has a decent income before he can think of matrimony. Finally as Church rules strictly prohibit marriage alliances with non-Christians, large numbers of girls in the community are doomed to life-long

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(17) See Chapter XI.



maidenhood.<sup>18</sup>

Marriage alliances with non-Christians cannot be considered as the most desirable solution of the problem of unmarried women in the Church. We have however to remember that it is a solution which has found favour in some parts of India. Thus for example commenting on the social environment of the Christian communities surveyed for the Tambaram Conference Dr. R. B. Manikam remarks, "The problem of marriage..... is the greatest problem for village Christians in the United Provinces. As long as Christian boys and girls are not available for marriages, connection with the old brotherhood will be maintained, and its rights and customs observed." Again, "The practice of Christians marrying non-Christians seems to be not unknown in certain parts of India. For example the Indore report states that of the ten families studied only two were marriages to Christians; in the rest Christians were married to non-Christians. In all these mixed marriages the rites followed were Hindu, and Brahmin priests officiated."<sup>19</sup>

As we have seen marriage alliances with non-Christians have been prohibited in the Malabar Church from the very-beginning. And the strict watch kept by presbyteries and other administrative bodies has prevented open violations of the rule. Yet the proportion of unmarried women is so high in the community that as non-Christians became more tolerant towards Chris-

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(18) Constitution and Rules of the Basel Mission Churches in India, (1900), section 87, and Rules of the S. I. U. C. Church, Malabar, section 33.

(19) The Christian College and the Christian Community by R. B. Manikam, p. 30.




tians, now and then such marriages have taken place. Of course in these instances either the woman takes care to dissociate herself from the Church before announcing the alliance or is excommunicated from the congregation. Some of these marriages are registered according to the Indian Christian Marriage Act. Civil marriage however involves some expense and considerable trouble. For there is only one marriage registrar for the whole district, and parties who desire to get married have either to go to his office at the district head-quarters, or take him at their expense to the mofussal. In a few instances we therefore find marriage alliances between Christians and non-Christians confirmed by an agreement which may be registered at any sub-registrar's office for a fee of 12 annas. In the vernacular such a marriage is known as a Panayakalyanam or literally a mortgage marriage. The woman is supposed to be mortgaged to the man for money advanced. The practice seems to have been introduced into Malabar by European Officers who advanced large sums of money to their concubines and who wanted to make themselves sure of the amount they had invested. Lawyers however point out that as a marriage contract such a document has no value. For the document does not create any conjugal right. Nor does it invest the woman or her issue with any rights on the man's property.

Marriage within the Basel Mission Church deserves to be examined also from the standpoint of eugenics. For in this community we find both outbreeding and inbreeding in succession. Many of the castes which

have entered the Church were exogamous groups within the Hindu fold. After conversion people who belonged to these exclusive sections have freely intermarried and merged into one homogeneous body. Scholars have shown that outbreeding may sometimes be very advantageous and sometimes very harmful, depending upon the nature of the genes which are contributed from either side.<sup>20</sup> Although from available data it is not possible to separate the effects of heredity from the effects of environment, as far as one may judge, the fusion of different castes does not seem to have resulted in any great advantage or disadvantage in the Basel Mission Church. Besides owing to the very limited numbers involved outbreeding has almost immediately been followed by inbreeding. Mathematically of course the number of families in the Basel Mission Church is large enough for a very long series of permutations and combinations. But in actual life the choice of a bridegroom is circumscribed by many practical considerations. Marriage between blood relations therefore is not at all uncommon in the Basel Mission Church, and inbreeding seems to be steadily proceeding. Theoretically like outbreeding inbreeding also may sometimes be very advantageous, and sometimes very disadvantageous. But under existing circumstances the consequences of inbreeding are more likely to be injurious than beneficial. In the words of Prof. Carr-Saunders, "On account of the genetic constitution of modern civilised races the immediate results of inbreeding may be bad. If the method sometimes

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(20) Eugenics by A. M. Carr-Saunders, p. 73.



followed by animal breeders were adopted, inbreeding could be used with the object of bringing undesirable latent genes to light and then of eliminating them. Such drastic policies are, however, applicable only to domestic animals and not to men, and therefore inbreeding is best avoided."<sup>21</sup>

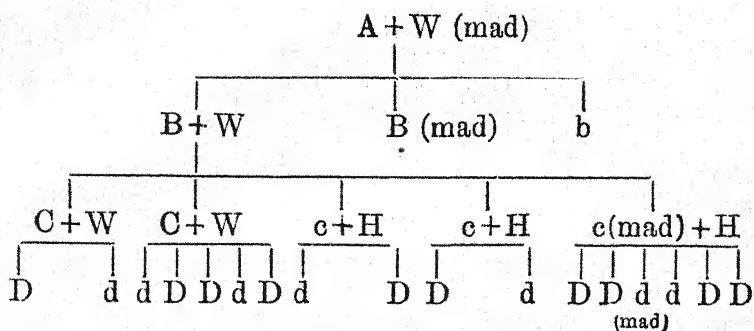
Writing about heredity in man J. B. S. Haldane points out some of the anomalies which marriage between near relations may produce in their progeny. He observes, "Recessive anomalies are vastly more likely to appear in the children of marriages between cousins, or of incestuous unions, than in the general public since two relations are likely to carry the same recessive gene. Among such anomalies are albinism, some types of retinites pigmentosa, "day-blindness." or total colour blindness, deaf-mutism in many families, a number of skin diseases, and several diseases of metabolism, including alcaptonuria."<sup>22</sup>

The accompanying genealogical tree indicates how a recessive anomaly like insanity has been passed on from generation to generation in a Malayalee Christian family, and will show the dire consequences to the individual as well as the community of eugenically unsound marriages, even when the contracting parties are not related. In this tree each generation is represented by a letter. Capital letters stand for males and

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(21) *op. cit.*, p. 74.

(22) *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, XIV Edition, article on Heredity by J. B. S. Haldane, M. A.



small letters for females. H indicates a husband, and W a wife married into the family. It will be evident from the tree that the first ancestor married a woman who had attacks of insanity. Of their three children one inherited the disease, but he died a bachelor. Among the others who appeared to be quite normal, the elder one married and had five children of whom the last became insane. All these five children are today married and have issues. But none of the last generation has shown symptoms of insanity so far except one child belonging to the afflicted woman. Some members of the family who are not insane have however exhibited signs of mental instability. We can be sure that when the common ancestor celebrated his wedding with all the accustomed festivities he never dreamed how much unhappiness he was storing up for his yet unborn descendants. A little knowledge of the laws of heredity will however enable the community to reduce such instances to a minimum and rear a population which improves both physically and mentally from generation to generation.



## CHAPTER VI

### Literacy, Education and Occupations

As the world meeting of the International Missionary Council held at Tambaram, Madras (1938) declared, "Education is, and must always be a major concern of the Church."<sup>1</sup> For no other process in modern life enables the rising generation to appreciate their social heritage so well, or to play their part so efficiently in working for its fulfilment. The Church will therefore look largely to the Christian primary schools for the ideas and attitudes which sway the majority of its members. The Christian high schools and colleges will decide the kind of leadership which is to guide the Church on its journey.

Literacy may be only one of the avenues to education. But even so its effect upon the economic well-being of a community is great. In a country like India where about 90% of those aged 5 and over can neither read nor write their mother tongue<sup>2</sup> it is indeed a blessing to be literate. For this ability protects the poor villager against fraud in accounts, enlarges his vision, increases his efficiency, enables him to give up habits which undermine his health or dissipate his resources, and fires him with fresh hope and new aspirations. Commenting upon the lack of education among industrial workers the Royal Commission on Labour remarked, "In India nearly the whole mass of

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(1) The World Mission of the Church, p. 86.

(2) Census of India (1931), Vol. 1, Part 1, p. 339,



industrial labour is illiterate, a state of affairs which is unknown in any other country of industrial importance. It is almost impossible to over-estimate the consequences of this disability, which is obvious in wages, in health, in productivity, in organisation and in several other directions.<sup>3</sup>

The measures taken by the Basel Mission to spread literacy in the congregations they established on this coast have already been described.<sup>4</sup> When the Malabar Church became an autonomous body elementary schools which specially served Christian congregations were handed over by the mission to the Church.<sup>5</sup> The financial implications of this change in management will be examined in a succeeding chapter.<sup>6</sup> For the present it is enough to note that all the larger congregations except Mattul and Pappinisherry are served by Christian schools under the management either of the Church or the mission. Among the mission schools three are secondary schools for boys, one a girls' high school, and another a second grade college.<sup>7</sup> Pastors and presbyteries have from the early days of the Malabar Church exercised their influence to see that Christian parents do not neglect the facilities that are provided for the education of their children. In

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(3) Report of the Royal Commission on Labour in India, p. 27.

(4) See Chapter II.

(5) Minutes of the Malabar Church Council which met in October 1933, p. 28.

(6) See Chapter XIII.

(7) These institutions are not meant only for Christian children. In fact the majority of students attending them are non-Christians.

fact the Church rules lay down that from the sixth year onwards till their confirmation, which takes place about the age of fifteen, all Christian children, both male and female, should attend school.<sup>8</sup>

The accompanying table will show to what extent the educational activities of the mission and the Church have borne fruit.<sup>9</sup>

### Literacy.

	Percentage among total population.	Percentage among males	Percentage among females
Madras Presidency ...	9	16	3
Indian Christians in the Presidency ...	17	22	11
Malabar ...	14	23	6
Hindus in Malabar ...	17	27	8
Muslims " ...	8	14	1
Christians " ...	41	48	33
Basel Mission Church, Malabar ...	87	96	82

Malabar is well-known in South India for its literacy. But even in such an area the percentage of literates within the Basel Mission Church stands far above the district ratio. In fact few other Christian Communities in India can show so creditable a record.

Educational institutions and Church rules alone could hardly have accomplished this feat. For such rules are not always strictly enforced, and we know

(8) Constitution and Rules of the Basel Mission Church in India (1902), Section 118, and Rules of the S. I. U. C. Church, Malabar, Section 53.

(9) Census of India (1931), Vol. 14, Part I, pp. 278 and 279. Also part II, p. 269.

from experience that many children who leave school before completing the fifth standard rapidly lapse into illiteracy. In the words of the Hartog Committee, "The explanation of such relapse is simple. Retention of initial literacy acquired at the early age of ten or eleven depends largely on environment, and the environment of the great majority of Indian pupils who leave school at the primary stage is not conducive to such retention. The parents in the village home are usually illiterate, they are too poor to buy books, and attractive vernacular literature and periodicals suitable for children are not available, though there are vernacular books which might be read by children under religious impulse."<sup>10</sup> Conditions within the Church have on the contrary been much more favourable to the retention of literacy. Almost every Christian home, however humble, contains a Bible and a hymn-book which the inmates often read. Besides many religious tracts and pamphlets are within their reach. Popular journals published either by the mission or the Church too have helped poor Christians to exercise their ability to read. Thus on the eve of the Great War more than 600 copies of a Malayalam fortnightly magazine called Keralopakari, and about 850 copies of a Malayalam monthly called Balamitram were printed by the mission for circulation in the Malabar Church.<sup>11</sup> After the war journalism within the Basel Mission Church had a very

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- (10) Review of the Growth of Education in British India by the Auxiliary Committee of the Indian Statutory Commission, p. 49.
- (11) The Seventy-Fourth Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1913, p. 72.

uncertain career. In the heat produced by controversial Church politics a few polemical periodicals were born, only to die after too brief an existence. One of these called the *Doothica* was however taken over by the Malabar Church Council in 1931.<sup>12</sup> Owing to financial difficulties the Church Council had unfortunately to discontinue its publication after five years. At the present time therefore there is a dearth of reading material among poor Christians. Literacy is not an end in itself; but only a means to an end. More reading material such as will appeal to poor Christian labourers and show them the way to material and spiritual progress seems to be one of the crying needs of the hour.

The following table which contains the age-distribution of the illiterate among 8239 members whose educational qualifications were ascertained in this survey draws our attention to another defect in the present system. These figures indicate a sudden increase in the number of illiterate females at the age of twenty.

Age.	Not attending school or Illiterate	
	Males.	Females.
5—10	21	26
10—20	20	36
20—30	38	127
30—40	37	117
40—50	42	106
50—60	32	136
60—70	24	81
70 and over	13	37
Total	227	666

(12) Minutes of the Malabar Church Council which met in August 1931, p. 16.

This sudden increase is not produced, as one may incautiously imagine, by lapse into illiteracy, but by adult conversions. Children who enter the Christian fold are usually sent to school. The Church has however made no provision for a literacy campaign among the illiterate converts who enter the community every year. Arrangements can be made to give some lessons in reading and writing also to the catechumens who come for religious instruction. With the help of simplified methods such as the one evolved by Dr. Frank Laubach perhaps enthusiastic teachers may be able to make almost every uneducated enquirer tolerably literate before he or she accepts baptism.

The existence of Christian high schools and a Christian second grade college has been a great incentive to higher education in the Malabar Church. In addition to free scholarships or loans granted to deserving Christian candidates by mission schools and the mission college, a stipend fund with a capital of about Rs. 20,000/- has also been established by the mission for the whole mission field on this coast.<sup>13</sup> Loans without interest are granted from this fund to Christian students who desire to go outside Malabar for higher education. Of course among the applicants preference is given to those candidates whose services are likely to be needed by the mission. The loans may be returned in easy instalments, and the amount available for fresh applicants in any year depends upon the repayments already made. Many of those who took loans from this fund have

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(13) I am indebted to the treasurer of the Basel Mission for most of the information in this paragraph.



been conscious of their obligation to fresh applicants, and have spared no pains in attempting to repay their debts. But cases have not been wanting in which candidates who owed their higher education to the help rendered by this fund so far forgot their responsibilities as to refrain from repaying the amount in time even when they could have done so without much exertion. Fee concessions and scholarships granted by first grade colleges maintained by other missions in South India too have been of considerable help in securing the benefits of a university education for young men and women from the Basel Mission Church.

No statistics are available concerning the progress of education in the Basel Mission Church at any previous period. But an analysis of educational qualifications by age-groups will enable one to trace the main lines of development in the community during the last few decades.<sup>14</sup> These figures indicate a steady decrease in the percentage of illiteracy from the higher to the lower age groups in the case both of the males and the females. In the lower age-groups we also observe a higher percentage of people who have taken high school and university courses. These facts certainly show that during the last few generations a larger proportion of young men and women have been able to enjoy the benefits of higher education. Attention has however to be drawn to one regrettable feature. The proportion of boys who leave the high school classes without being able to secure

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(14) In the following table decimal places are given only where the figure is less than a unit.

## Educational Qualifications by Age Groups-Males.

Age.	Percentage of the total number in each age group.						
	Illiterate.	Just literate.	First Form to Third Form.	Fourth Form to Sixth Form.	S. S. L. C.	Intermediate.	Graduates.
20—30	6	36	28	16	11	2	2
30—40	7	46	27	9	7	1	2
40—50	12	40	28	9	7	.6	3
50—60	11	47	23	14	3	.7	1
60—70	17	56	14	8	6	—	—
70 & Over.	19	56	15	4	4	—	1

## Educational Qualifications by Age Groups-Females.

Age.	Percentage of the total number in each age group.						
	Illiterate.	Just literate.	First Form to Third Form	Fourth Form to Sixth Form.	S. S. L. C.	Intermediate.	Graduates.
20—30	17	37	30	7	8	1	1
30—40	21	43	26	4	6	.4	.4
40—50	24	41	28	5	1	.2	.2
50—60	42	37	19	2	—	—	—
60—70	46	38	16	—	—	—	—
70 & Over.	52	41	7	—	—	—	—

a complete S. S. L. C. certificate is comparatively high. Financial difficulties do not form the only obstacle in their way. Owing probably to underfeeding many boys

who come from poor families are too slow to profit by a high school course. The number of those who fail to appreciate the facilities that are provided for their education also remains fairly large. In a community consisting of families which have broken loose from age-long traditions, and among pupils whose parents themselves did not enjoy the benefits of higher education, some lack of responsibility can be understood. But its economic consequences are disastrous both to the individual and the society. For many occupations are entirely closed to boys who have not passed the S. S. L. C. Examination.

The above-mentioned statistics take no account of professional or technical qualifications. Among over 8000 members whose educational qualifications were ascertained 289 males 300 females had successfully undergone courses in professional training—mostly in teaching, divinity, or medicine—but only 31 males and 9 females could mention any technical examinations they had passed. Even after making due allowance for the technicians who have left Malabar in search of employment this figure must be considered very low. Although facilities for technical education were formerly very limited in Malabar, the Basel Mission Industries offered an opportunity to get practical experience in many branches of textile manufacturing, tile manufacturing, and mechanical engineering. With the change in management of these industrial concerns, however, local Christians have lost these opportunities to a certain extent. Besides our statistics take account only of those who can show a diploma or certificate. Technical and technological courses outside Malabar which

involve long years of training are moreover above the means of most families in the Basel Mission Church. It is a pity however that even such facilities as exist in Malabar to-day are not availed of by the members of this community. For example the Government Industrial School and the Government Soap Factory have been in existence at Calicut now for many years. Scores of young men, some even coming from outside the district, have taken their diplomas in these institutions and found lucrative employment. But so far no young man belonging to the Basel Mission Church in Malabar has studied soap-manufacturing. Those who have taken a course in the industrial school may be counted on the fingers of one hand. The supply of technicians has certainly not outrun the demand in South India. Want of guidance, dislike of manual labour, and an aversion to leave the beaten track seem to be largely responsible for the failure of this community to take advantage of such facilities as it commands in the matter of technical education.

On a cursory view one might conclude that literacy and education have been of little help to the members of the Malabar Church in finding employment. For within the Church only 35% of the total population is employed as against 56% in the Presidency and 39% in Malabar.<sup>15</sup> But in comparing the percentage of workers within the Church with the percentage outside we have to remember that among Basel Mission Chris-

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(15) Census of India (1931), Vol. 14, Part I, p. 193 and part II, p. 116.



tians most children between 5 and 15 are at school. Among other communities in Malabar and the Presidency, the majority of children do not, except in rare cases, attend school and therefore may come to be counted as workers.<sup>16</sup> The absence of child labour certainly inflicts a temporary economic loss upon the Basel Mission Church. But all those who take a long view of things will admit that the ultimate advantages of literacy and education will far outweigh the loss which the community may thus incur. In fact when we examine the male population in the Church between the ages of 20 and 50 we find that 82% of them are employed.

It does not of course mean that all those who are employed have found occupations suitable for them. Many have been compelled by the pressure of circumstances to accept work which will ever remain uncongenial in their eyes. An analysis of the unemployed in the community according to educational qualifications throws some light upon the problem of finding employment. Among males aged 20 to 50 the column for the illiterate does not show any unemployment at all. No greater mistake can be made than to conclude that the demand for illiterate labourers must therefore be very great in the locality. On the other hand conditions are so uncertain for most day labourers that with equal justice they might be classified

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(16) In 1937-38 the percentage of those under instruction to the total population in the Madras Presidency was only 7.3.

. See Madras Administration 1937-38, p. 104.



Unemployed males aged 20 to 50.		
Educational Qualifications.	As Percentage of the total number unemployed.	As Percentage of the total number having the same educational qualification.
Illiterate ...	0	0
Literate: up to 3rd form.	53	7
4th Form to 6th Form...	26	20
S. S. L. C. and Intermediate ...	19	18
Graduates ...	3	9

either as employed or unemployed.<sup>17</sup> Among the literate we find the number of unemployed males decreasing with educational qualifications. But the relative strength of the unemployed in the different educational groups does not form a correct index of the varying difficulties which young men with different educational qualifications have to meet in securing employment. More than half the unemployed males in the community belong to the lowest educational group. But at the same time it is not they who experience the greatest difficulty in getting work. For the unemployed in this educational group form only 7% of the total number of males who have the same educational qualifications. On the other hand although youngman who have failed to complete the S. S. L. C. course form only a quarter of the total unemployed in the community, their fate seems to be much harder. For the unemployed in this class form 20% of the total number of males having the same educational qualifications.

(17) For further details see Chapter IX.

With reference to the economic consequences of education, the Basel Mission Church in Malabar forms a deplorable contrast to the Syrian Christian community in Travancore. In 1821 the Syrian Christians were economically so backward that Mar Dionysius III, the Syrian Metropolitan of Malankara wrote in a letter to the then British Resident of Travancore as follows:—"The majority of the Puthencoor Syrians are poor and support themselves by daily labour; others employ themselves in merchandise and agriculture. There are very few indeed among them possessing property worth five thousand rupees." But the progress of literacy and education has enabled Syrian Christians in the course of a hundred years to compete successfully with other advanced communities in every walk of life. The spread of education and the opening of salaried posts seem to have created an economic regeneration in the community. The savings from the salaries and the professional incomes became the capital necessary for the starting of trade and industries. The change has been so remarkable that in 1931 the census commissioner for Cochin wrote:—"The Christians compete with Tamil Brahmins in quasi-commercial callings and lead the van in industrial occupations.....The progress of higher education in the community has enabled them to compete successfully with others in public administration, the professions and liberal arts."<sup>18</sup>

Although the percentage of literates stands remarkably high in the Malabar Church and higher

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(18) The Economic and Social Environment of the Church in North Travancore and Cochin by P. C. Joseph M. A., p. 70.

education has made steady progress among the members, no economic regeneration such as we find in the Syrian Christian community has taken place here. For it was only after the Great War that educated young men from the Basel Mission Church began to enter Government service in sufficiently large numbers. As a matter of fact seeking employment anywhere outside the mission was in early days regarded with disfavour by the missionaries. For example writing about a new convert who desired to enter Government service as his non-Christian father had done, the Fifth Report of the Basel Mission in South-Western India remarks, "The experience of one month more has shown that he has not so entirely broken with the world as he himself perhaps imagined. For, the solicitations of his friends, well acquainted with his love of ease, conjuring him to enter into government employ, in which case they offer to make him enjoy all things richly, have not failed to make some impression on him; and though he still prefers our advice to theirs, and roughs it well enough with poor fare, the lightness and flexibility of his character forbid us to be too sanguine. At least we have reason to be glad that others do not know English, and are thereby exempt in a measure from the temptation of seeking to unite Christian service with an office in courts or cutcherries, from the temptation of priding themselves on choice phrases and a fine running hand, whilst their countrymen are dying all around for the lack of the most necessary knowledge."<sup>19</sup> Again writing about education as one of the agencies for building up

(19) The Fifth Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1844-45, p. 53.

the Church the mission report for the year 1894 observes:—"We have also established secondary schools, or seminaries, or colleges for the higher education and training of mission agents who are called to take part in the great commission of our Lord to go forth and teach all nations ... .. But we are unable to agree with those who hold that it is the duty of the Missionary Societies in Europe and America to educate indiscriminately all their Christian converts, even those who do not intend to enter mission service, up to the highest standards of collegiate education."<sup>20</sup> The present generation can and of course will appreciate the eagerness with which the early missionaries desired to spread the gospel on this coast. But it is indeed a great pity that at the same time they did not realise the economic advantage of having a few Christians who held responsible positions in government service or professional life.

At the outbreak of the Great European War when the Basel Mission was for a time compelled to withdraw from India the vast majority of educated men among Basel Mission Christians were therefore employed under the mission. The war either closed or restricted these opportunities. And for a time the Malabar Church had to pass through a period of great suffering. Such difficulties, however, turned the rising generation to other avenues. Even to-day there are many occupations in which Basel Mission Christians are practically unrepresented. But the dispersion into many new

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(20) The Fifty-Fifth Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1894, p. 57.

occupational groups which they have already achieved has undoubtedly lessened the shock which the present war would otherwise have given to the Malabar Church.

### OCCUPATIONS IN THE BASEL MISSION CHURCH, MALABAR.

Occupation.	Percentage of workers under each head in the Basel Mission Church.		Percentage of workers under each head in Malabar.	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
1. Exploitation of animals and vegetation...	7.7	9.4	40.0	26.8
2. Exploitation of minerals	—	—	.003	—
3. Industry ...	46.9	43.8	13.5	17.1
4. Transport ...	4.1	—	2.7	.1
5. Trade ...	9.6	.7	10.1	2.6
6. Public service (including teachers, nurses etc. under Government or local bodies.) ...	6.1	11.1	1.4	.01
7. Professions and Liberal Arts ...	16.8	15.9	4.2	.92
8. Persons living on their income ...	5.2	10.2	.69	.01
9. Domestic service ...	1.4	8.7	1.1	21.0
10. Others ...	2.0	—	26.6	31.4

Lack of variety forms the main characteristic of occupational distribution among the Basel Mission Christians in Malabar. According to the above table the majority of people find employment in industry or professions; and the other main departments of activity are also adequately represented.<sup>21</sup> A glance at Appendix Index No. 11 which gives more details under each head will however show that many of the possible sub-divi-

(21) The percentages for Malabar are calculated from statistics given in Census of India (1931), Vol. 14, Part 2, p. 116.



sions are yet unexplored. More than half of those who are classified as carrying on trade are only clerks in commercial establishments. About three fourths of those engaged in professions and the liberal arts are servants of the Church or the mission; nearly 90% of those who are described as engaged in the exploitation of animals and vegetation are agricultural labourers; practically all those mentioned under transport are employed in motor vehicles or the railway. Not only have Basel Mission Christians failed to spread out on the economic field, but have in fact lost some of their original occupations. Scores of fishermen have joined the Basel Mission Church in Malabar. But among 1822 workers whose occupations were examined we could find only one solitary individual who carries on fishing at the present time. The majority of converts who entered the Church must originally have been cultivators; but to-day cultivation occupies a very insignificant place among occupations in the community.

Reference has already been made to the circumstances which have contributed to create such a state of affairs.<sup>22</sup> The aversion with which non-Christians considered a convert often made it impossible for him to pursue his previous employment. Under the prevailing system of land tenure agriculturists especially could get no land for cultivation. The disabilities of the caste system moreover have led converts to look with contempt on the occupation which is connected with the iniquitous social organisation from which they have

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(22) See Chapter 3.

escaped. Finally to the vast majority of artisans and peasants who embraced Christianity the industrial establishments started by the mission offered the means of earning a comfortable livelihood. In fact the spread of literacy within the Church enabled the members to adjust themselves to conditions in the factory with much less trouble than they could otherwise have done. Besides the more intelligent and better educated among the members were, as we have seen, rapidly absorbed into the evangelistic and educational departments of the mission.

The social conditions which restricted a convert's choice of occupation in former times have lately undergone a very remarkable change. Hindus in Malabar no longer regard converts with the aversion which was shown in olden days. And recent events have made the Church to realise how disadvantageous it is to have a large proportion of members in one or two occupations which are liable to unexpected fluctuations. The depression in the tile industry was one such experience. The majority of members at Kodacal and Melparamba for example are dependent on tile factories for their subsistence. When work becomes slack, and the factories are closed for some days, the whole congregation is compelled to suffer many privations. The annual reports on the condition of the Malabar Church submitted to the Church Council indicate to what straits these congregations have been reduced on such occasions.<sup>23</sup> There is no reason to hope that the tile

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(23) Minutes of the Malabar Church Council which met in September 1932, p. 32; minutes of the Malabar Church Council which met in January 1933, p. 23.

industry will be exposed to less violent fluctuations in the future. For the demand for tiles is very elastic. Whenever general economic conditions deteriorate building operations tend to be greatly restricted, and with the number of factories in existence to-day over-production is bound to ensue.<sup>24</sup> In times of prosperity such dangers however never present themselves before the worker's imagination. Unless the leaders of the Church make a determined effort to direct the more enterprising among the rising generation to new avenues, this sort of concentration in an employment liable to violent fluctuations is likely to continue to the detriment of the community.

Hand-loom weavers form another occupational group leading a precarious existence. In places like Calicut and Cannanore where well-managed hand-loom factories exist, of course, the weavers are comparatively prosperous. But at Chombala and Nettur to mention two other places hand-loom weavers are struggling for a bare existence. Before the Great War branch factories connected with the Basel Mission Industries provided them with steady employment. After these branches were closed hand-loom weavers at both Chombala and Nettur had to face very hard times. Many in fact left the stations in search of employment. Some of those who still continue at Chombala and

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(24) Report of the Department of Industries, Madras, for the  
 year ending 31 March, 1931, p. 21.  
 Report " " " " 1932, p. 17.  
 Report " " " " 1933, p. 22.  
 Report " " " " 1934, p. 28.  
 Report " " " " 1936, p. 37.

Nettur have their own looms. But they possess neither the capital necessary nor a ready market where they might dispose of their produce. The leaders of the community will be doing a real service if they help these weavers to organize co-operative societies, so that they might obtain cheap credit and have at the same time a reliable organization for marketing their goods.<sup>25</sup>

In conclusion attention has to be drawn to the almost complete absence of any important subsidiary occupation except mat and basket making within the Basel Mission Church. All the 1578 families together which were investigated possessed only 364 cows and 368 goats. The average number of fowls owned by a family stands below two, and these of the most inferior variety. In a community which is largely dependent on factories and professions the absence of subsidiary occupations may to some extent be natural. But there are stations like Mattul, Madai, Chalisherry and Vanianculam where the development of subsidiary occupations will be a material help to many agricultural labourers. In fact an unsuccessful attempt was recently made by the mission to start coir-spinning among the converts from the depressed classes at Mattul. The wages earned by coir spinners certainly are very unattractive. A woman who works only in spare time earns from 10 pies to one anna a day to supplement the family income; a whole-time coolie engaged in spinning coir earns about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  annas to 2 annas. But as the special officer for the survey of cottage industries has pointed out it is not impossible to secure higher wages for the spinner

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(25) For details about the Co-operative movement in the Malabar Church see Chapter XII.

if only measures are taken to eliminate the profits made by the owners of cocoanut gardens or the middlemen from whom the spinner has to buy the husks on the one hand, and the merchants who buy the yarn from the spinner for the exporting houses or the coir factories on the other.<sup>26</sup> Instead of buying husks from the local merchants who look upon the mission as an unwelcome intruder into their preserve, if the mission will buy cocoanuts or take a lease of some land which will supply them with the necessary quantity, and will establish relations directly with the exporting firms, the business is likely to succeed. Under these circumstances the mission may also find it possible to pay the spinners something more than the usual wages they earn by spinning coir. If the mission or the Church does not desire to take direct responsibility for carrying on such a business, the same purpose may of course be achieved through co-operative societies.

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(26) Preliminary Report on the Survey of Cottage Industries in the Malabar, South Canara, and the Nilgiri Districts by D. Narayana Rao, B. A., pp. 6-8 and Report on the Survey of Cottage Industries in the Madras Presidency by D. Narayana Rao, B. A., p. 43.



## CHAPTER VII

### Cocoanut Cultivation

Although the cocoanut palm might have been growing wild in ancient Malabar, an incentive to its cultivation seems to have come from Ceylon. According to tradition a leper King of Ceylon who discovered that the oil pressed from the nuts of a palm growing wild in the southern parts of his domain gave him great relief, encouraged his subjects to cultivate this tree and use its oil as a remedy for the foul disease. Years afterwards a descendant of this Ceylonese monarch happened to visit Malabar. Finding that the land was exceptionally suitable for the cultivation of cocoanuts he obtained permission from the King of Malabar to open a cocoanut plantation. He then sent down some of his Sinhalese gardeners who intermarried with Malayalee women and became the forefathers of the Thiya community.<sup>1</sup> Even from early times cocoanut cultivation formed such a characteristic feature of Malabar that the land itself came to be known as Keralam, the land of cocoanuts.<sup>2</sup> Today Malabar has an area of 335,351 acres under cocoanut, and is the most important centre of cocoanut production in the Madras Presidency.<sup>3</sup>

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(1) See Chapter I.

(2) There are also other theories concerning the etymology of the word Keralam. See Gazetteer of the Malabar District, Vol. I, p. 27.

(3) The Cocoanut by J. S. Patel, M. Sc., Ph. D., p. 5.

The number of people who are classified as cultivators does not give an adequate conception of the place which cocoanut cultivation occupies in the economy of the Malabar Church. For in Malabar the cocoanut is not cultivated on large plantations. All the many thousands of nuts which are annually exported from this district come from small compounds surrounding the homesteads of its inhabitants. Every enclosure surrounding a house, however narrow it may be, contains a few cocoanut palms intermixed perhaps with mango and jack trees or plantains. In fact the average size of cocoanut gardens on the West Coast has been calculated to be below two acres.<sup>4</sup> Many families whose main source of income may be a profession, trade, or industry are therefore able to add something to their earnings from the profits of their garden. In the present survey it was found that among the total number of families investigated about one third possessed such compounds.

An attempt was made through the general questionnaire to ascertain the approximate area of land possessed by families in the Malabar Church. As even educated householders were unable to give the area of their compounds with any approach to accuracy the attempt had to be given up. It is possible however to calculate the average size of a holding among Basel Mission Christians in another way. Most Basel Mission Christians who possess cocoanut gardens are tenants of the United Basel Mission Church Trust Association. By dividing the total area the Trust Association has

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(4) But in Ceylon, over 50% of the cocoanut area is in holdings of over 10 acres each. *op. cit.* p. 31.

leased out by the number of tenants we find that on an average a compound in the Basel Mission Church is less than an acre in extent. The majority of those who possess garden lands have a kuzhikanam right on their holdings. Those who possess janmam rights on their property are extremely limited.<sup>5</sup>

In order to give an idea of the extent to which cocoanut cultivation is profitable, the income and expenditure statement of a specimen garden may be examined. The garden belongs to an educated man at Nettur, and is well maintained.

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR A YEAR.

1. Area of the garden—25 Cents.

2. Trees

- a. Cocoanut palms 24
- b. Jack trees 6
- c. Mango trees 3
- d. Pepper vines 9
- e. A few plantains

Expenditure:—

Income:—

	Rs.	As.	Ps.		Rs.	As.	Ps.
1. Eight coolies at as. 4 a day	2	0	0	1. Cocoanuts (450)	12	7	0
2. Ash manure	3	0	0	2. Jack fruits	3	0	0
3. Baskets etc.	0	8	0	3. Mangoes	0	8	0
4. Land revenue	1	8	0	4. Plantains	3	0	0
				5. Pepper (9 lbs. dry)	2	8	0
	7	0	0				
Net profit	14	7	0	Total	21	7	0
Total	21	7	0				

(5) See Chapter 1 for some details about the tenancy system in Malabar.

According to the above figures a cocoanut garden one acre in extent will give a net profit of Rs. 57-12-0 a year. Some years ago the profits were much higher. In 1928-29 for example the price of cocoanut on the West Coast stood at Rs. 60/- per thousand as against Rs. 26-12-0 at the present time. <sup>6</sup> Other things being equal therefore an acre of cocoanut land would have brought in a net profit of about Rs. 116/- But those times are gone, and seen very unlikely to return.

The fall in the price of cocoanuts which began in 1925 has been brought about by various factors. Partly, of course, it was due to the general fall in prices which followed the post-war boom period. Other causes too have been at work. The achievements of science brought many rivals like whale oil and groundnut oil to this commodity in the manufacture of margarine and soap. Remarkable progress has moreover been made in cocoanut plantations over many tropical islands. Between 1921 and 1930 the acreage under cocoanut in the whole world increased 30 per cent as against an increase of 17 per cent in India. By adopting large scale methods in production and sale, the new rivals are able to compete successfully with the Indian produce even in the Indian market. Under existing conditions the prospect of a considerable rise in the price of cocoanuts therefore seems to be remote indeed. <sup>7</sup>

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(6) For the price of cocoanuts in 1928-29 see Report on Cocoanut Enquiry in India by Dr. J. S. Patel, M. Sc., Ph. D., p. 27.

(7) Journal of the Madras University, Vol. XI, No. 2-Article on Commodity prices in South India 1918-1935 by Dr. P. J. Thomas & N. Sundararama Sastry. According to

Land-owners have been doubly hit by a fall in the price of cocoanuts. As we have seen the net income from an acre of land under cocoanut has been reduced by about 50%. Correspondingly there has also been a fall in the value of land. Among Basel Mission Christians however there are few land-owners. The majority of those who possess cocoanut gardens are Kuzhikanam tenants, and the following statement supplied by one of them will illustrate the economic situation of this class:—

## STATEMENT OF INCOME &amp; EXPENDITURE FOR A YEAR.

1. Area— $\frac{1}{2}$  acre.
2. Trees
  - a. Cocoanut palms 43
  - b. Jack & mango trees 8
  - c. Pepper vines 20
  - d. Minor cultivation—  
Plantains & vegetables.

Expenditure.			Income.		
	Rs.	As. Ps.		Rs.	As. Ps.
1. Fifteen coolies at as. 5/- a day.	4	11 0	1. Cocoanuts (750)	20	1 0
2. Ash manure	1	5 0	2. Jack fruits	2	0 0
3. Rent	6	4 0	3. Mangoes	0	12 0
			4. Vegetables	0	12 0
			5. Pepper (15 lbs.)	3	12 0
	12	4 0			
Net profit	15	1 0	Total	27	5 0
Total	27	5 0			

figures published in the Fort St. George Gazette under the Compensation for Tenants' Improvements Act the average price of 1000 unhusked Cocoanuts in Malabar after 1934 has been as follows:—

1934—35	Rs. 20 6 0
1935—36	34 7 0
1936—37	33 0 0
1937—38	31 11 0
1938—39	28 11 0
1939—40	26 12 0



According to the above statement a tenant cultivator gets a net income of about Rs. 30-2-0 from an acre of cocoanut garden. In 1928-29 when the market price of cocoanuts stood more than twice as high as it is to day, the same cultivator would have been able, other things being equal, to make a net profit of Rs. 80/- on his compound.

Other things were not however equal. In consideration of the fall in prices the Trust Association has recently allowed a reduction of 25 per cent in the rent payable by their tenants. Formerly therefore the tenants were paying a higher rent than they do at the present time. Although this concession has brought some relief to the tenants, they have a feeling that the reduction has been inadequate. As this feeling seems to be wide-spread it is necessary to examine whether according to the standard fixed by the Malabar Tenancy Act the rate of assessment now in force may be considered reasonable.

According to section 7 of the Malabar Tenancy Act fair rent of garden land shall be only a share of  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the average gross produce for the previous three years. This share is to be determined as follows: as regards cocoanut trees in respect of which the landlord is bound to pay compensation in case of eviction the share shall be  $\frac{1}{5}$  of the said  $\frac{1}{3}$ ; and as regards trees in respect of which he is not bound to pay compensation the share shall be  $\frac{2}{5}$  of the said  $\frac{1}{3}$ . Where pepper is not the principal crop on the land, as regards pepper vines in respect of which the land-lord is bound to pay compensation in case of eviction, the share shall be  $\frac{1}{6}$  of the said  $\frac{1}{3}$ ; and as regards vines in respect of which

he is not bound to pay such compensation, the share shall be  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the said  $\frac{1}{3}$ . Nothing shall be payable for the minor produce of cocoanut trees or for the produce of other classes of fruit-bearing trees such as jack and mangoes. The collector shall in the month of April every year publish in the Malabar District Gazette the average market price of paddy, cocoanut and pepper for the twelve complete months preceding the date of publication. And when any rent is to be paid in money the produce shall be valued, for determining the sum due, at the average market price of the previous five years.

The fair rent of the above mentioned compound may be calculated in the light of these instructions. In this compound the janmi has only 14 old cocoanut palms of which 3 have ceased to bear. The annual yield from the janmi's trees has been calculated at about 100 cocoanuts on an average. The remaining palms which belong to the tenant altogether give an annual yield of 650 cocoanuts. So the fair rent on cocoanut palms in the compound should be  $\frac{2}{5}$  of 100 plus  $\frac{1}{5}$  of 650 cocoanuts or their value. At the average price for the last five years this will amount to Rs. 5-0-7.<sup>8</sup> To this amount we have also to add the rent on pepper which should be  $\frac{1}{6}$  of 15 lbs., or its

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(8) According to the figures published by the Government of Madras in exercise of the powers conferred by the Malabar Compensation for Tenants' Improvements Act the average price of 1000 unhusked cocoanuts for the five years from 1935 to 1939 was Rs. 29-10-2.

value.<sup>9</sup> The janmi is not entitled to collect any rent on the fruit trees or the minor cultivation in a coconut garden. Thus altogether the fair rent of the compound works out at Rs. 5-0-7 plus 1-2-7 which is equal to Rs. 6-3-0. This is not much less than the sum of Rs. 6-4-0 which the tenant has to pay as rent. It must however be borne in mind that the amount of Rs. 6-4-0 involves a reduction of 25% from the rent agreed to in the lease deed. This reduction will be available to the tenant only if the rent is paid within a certain date. If the tenant falls into arrears the Trust Association will grant a reduction of only 12½%. That is he will have to pay Rs. 7-5-0. Even in the case of this compound therefore unless the tenant clears his dues by the appointed day he will be compelled to pay more than the fair rent allowed by law. As the existing lease deeds were executed more than twelve years ago and do not have any relation to prevailing prices no judicial authority will however sanction such a claim.

The following instance from Nettur gives a yet more glaring example of excessive rent.

1. Area—23 cents.

2. Trees

a. Cocconut palms	27
b. Jack trees	7
c. Mango trees	4

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(9) According to the figures published by the Government of Madras in exercise of the powers conferred by the Malabar Compensation For Tenants' Improvements Act the average price of pepper per lb., for the five years from 1935 to 1939 was 7 as. 5 ps.

d. Silk-cotton tree	1
e. Pepper vines	5
f. Minor cultivation	Plantains and vegetables.

Expenditure.				Income.			
	Rs.	As.	Ps.		Rs.	As.	Ps.
1. Six coolies at as. 8 per day	3	0	0	1. Cocoanuts (350)	9	6	0
2. Ash manure	1	0	0	2. Jack fruits	3	0	0
3. Rent	10	0	0	3. Mangoes	0	8	0
				4. Silk-cotton	2	0	0
	14	0	0	5. Pepper (20 lbs.)	2	8	0
Net profit	4	6	0	6. Vegetables	1	0	0
Total	18	6	0	Total	18	6	0

All the cocoanut palms and pepper vines in this compound belong to the Trust Association. The average annual yield excluding those items which do not enter into the calculation of rent is reckoned at 350 cocoanuts and 20 lbs. of pepper. According to the Tenancy Law the fair rent of the compound should therefore be  $\frac{2}{5}$  of 350 cocoanuts plus  $\frac{1}{3}$  of 20 lbs. of pepper or their value. At the average price for the last 5 years this would amount to Rs. 4-2-5 plus Rs. 3-1-5 or Rs. 7-3-10. Actually however the tenant has to pay Rs. 10/- (after making the 25 per cent deduction allowed by the Trust Association to those who pay the rent in time) which is 38 per cent in excess of the fair rent.

With low prices for cocoanuts and high rent due to the land owner, garden cultivation has become much less profitable than it was some years ago. But it is not impossible to improve the cocoanut cultivator's



plight by adopting new cultural practices. Among the two gardens mentioned above the first yields at the rate of 1800 nuts per acre and the second at the rate of 1500 nuts. The accompanying table will show how these figures compare with the average yield per acre in Malabar and other places.<sup>10</sup> Very many gardens in the possession of Basel Mission Christians, however, do not

Place	Average yield per acre.
Travancore State	1,750
Cochin, Malabar and South Canara	1,600
Mysore State	2,000
Tanjore District-Delta	3,000
Tanjore District—Coastal	1,750
East Godavari	2,000
Orissa	1,200
Bengal	2,000
Ceylon	2,000

maintain even the standard attained by the second specimen. One has only to visit a place like Codacal to see to what extent members of the Basel Mission Church neglect their compounds.

During the last many years the Agricultural Department has been making a systematic attempt to improve cocoanut cultivation in Malabar. The chief points emphasised by the departmental propagandists may for convenience be summarised here<sup>11</sup>. They first

(10) Report on Cocoanut Enquiry in India by Dr. J. S. Patel, M. Sc., Ph. D., p. 17.

(11) Pamphlet No. 8 issued by the Agricultural Department—Cocoanut Cultivation by Dr. J. S. Patel.



suggest that a cocoanut garden should never be over-planted. Owing to the Improvements Act according to which the landlord is bound to pay compensation for improvements made by a tenant whom he wants to evict in proportion to the number of trees in the compound it has become the custom in Malabar for tenants to over-plant their gardens. Research however has shown that overplanting reduces the yield per acre. The department therefore suggests not more than 75 trees per acre on the West Coast generally. Besides the question of seed selection is of the utmost importance in a perennial crop like the cocoanut which lasts for over 80 years; for the effects of wrong selection will trouble the planter for a considerable number of years, and cannot be easily remedied as in the case of annual crops. Therefore the department gives detailed directions concerning the selection of seednuts, the raising of a nursery and transplantation. If the seedlings are planted so as to form an equilateral triangle with each group of three plants one will be able to plant the largest number of trees per acre without shortening the distance between them. When cocoanut palms become old under-planting has to be done. But as the under-planted trees compete with the old ones for the food in the soil it is best not to have any underplanting until the palms are at least 60 years old. The soil in the whole garden, and not merely round the palms, has to be either dug up or ploughed before the monsoon breaks. To conserve soil moisture and destroy weeds the process of digging or ploughing has to be repeated immediately after the monsoon. The fertility of cocoanut gardens also needs to be replenished with suitable manure.

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Wood-ash, cattle manure, green manure, and artificial fertilisers are all recommended. Where green manure is not available in sufficient quantities cow gram or some other green manure may be cultivated and ploughed into the soil. It would appear that in Ceylon "by systematic cultivation and manuring a yield of 4000 to 4500 nuts may be obtained; with regular cultivation and weeding, but without manuring, a yield of 2500 to 3000 nuts is obtained."<sup>12</sup>

An attempt was made through the special questionnaire addressed to those engaged in cultivation to ascertain how far the suggestions made by the agricultural department have received the attention of Basel Mission Christians in Malabar. The answers are disheartening. In very many cases the number of palms planted is out of all proportion to the size of the compound. Instructions concerning the selection of seeds and seedlings are mostly unheeded. Trees are not always planted in rows, nor in any order. Underplanting takes place either before or after the time when it should. Even in one of the specimen gardens mentioned above we found three old palms which had ceased to bear. The tenant is waiting for the trees to fall down and vacate his compound. Wood-ash is the only manure generally applied. Although farm-yard manure and green manure may not always be available, it is quite possible to cultivate some pulses and plough them in. But most of those who were approached had never heard of such a process, and on being told did not take it seriously. The best that they usually do

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(12) The Coconut by Dr. J. S. Patel, M. Sc., Ph. D., p. 28.

for the garden is to dig up the soil twice a year and put a basket of ash manure at the foot of the palm.

The cocoanut gardens with which this survey is concerned do not seem to be very much troubled by diseases or pests. At Chombala however in the rainless months the leaves of cocoanut palms are reported to become bronze coloured and dry. This probably is due to the wilt disease caused by drought. In such cases where the palms cannot be watered during the period of severe drought, the addition of organic matter to the soil is said to produce beneficial results. The soils where this wilt occurs regularly are besides stated to be unsuitable to grow most of the cocoanut varieties.<sup>13</sup> The drying of the leaves may however be due not to the wilt disease at all; but to an attack of the caterpillar called *Nephantis Serinopa*. Anyhow in all such instances it would be desirable to take expert opinion through the Agricultural Department.

Members of the Malabar Church do not seem to experience any difficulty in disposing of the cocoanuts they produce. The wholesale price of cocoanuts is published by the vernacular dailies; and as every congregation commands facilities of transport which would enable the people to convey the nuts to the marketing centre, up-country merchants cannot hope to impose upon the primary producer. In fact Dr. Patel who conducted the cocoanut enquiry in 1934 states that on the West Coast as a whole the cultivator receives a reasonable share of the prices.<sup>14</sup>

(13) *op. cit.*, p. 259.

(14) Report on Cocoanut Enquiry in India by Dr. J. S. Patel, M. Sc., Ph. D., p. 27.

Finally attention has to be drawn to the scarcity of cover and catch crops in the cocoanut gardens under survey. "Where periodical heavy rains are received the surface soil must be kept covered either under grass or a crop during the rainy season. If the land is barren during the rainy season erosion sets in and the fertility of the soil deteriorates. In addition the cover crops smother weeds. A cover crop is to be chosen with exclusive regard to the interest of the cocoanut, but a catch crop is expected also to be immediately profitable to the planter. The selection of these crops has to be with reference to the age of the cocoanut plantation. The crop which may be suitable for growing among young cocoanut seedlings may not be suitable for old plantations. Another important consideration in the selection of crops is their duration. In localities where definite dry seasons occur, it would be inadvisable to have crops which compete with the cocoanut during the dry season."<sup>15</sup>

Banana, rice, colocasia, yam and tapioca may be cultivated as catch crops in cocoanut gardens. Among the various kinds of cover crops which have been tried at the experimental station Kasaragod, cow gram was found to satisfy most of the conditions necessary for a good cover crop on this coast. It has an additional value, especially in places where green manure is scarce. For normally it yields from 5000 to 10000 lbs. of green stuff per acre, and can conveniently be ploughed into the soil. But neither in the cocoanut gardens of

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(15) The Cocoanut by Dr. J. S. Patel, M. Sc., Ph. D., p. 169.

Malayalee Christians nor of their non-Christian neighbours do we find any such crop cultivated.

In spite of all the work done by the Agricultural Department new ideas seem to travel slowly.<sup>16</sup> If the improvements suggested in the above paragraphs should be brought into effect, and the Basel Mission Christian should obtain the best out of his cocoanut garden, a veritable change has to take place in his mental outlook. He must learn to look with pride upon his compound, however small it may be. He must abandon that false sense of dignity which compels him to call in a day-labourer to dig up a few square yards of land. He must also create a permanent organisation which will keep him in touch with the latest developments in agriculture. Under proper guidance a little more of attention and labour will enable him to convert the barren enclosure which surrounds his dwelling into a flourishing kitchen garden. It will add variety to his diet; it may bring a few rupees more into his purse; it will give, especially to those who follow sedentary occupations, more exercise and better health.

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(16) For an account of the work done by the Agricultural Department to improve cocoanut cultivation in Malabar see Reports of Subordinate Officers of the Department of Agriculture, Madras, for 1937-38, p. 72.



## CHAPTER VIII

### Rice Cultivation.

In the Madras Presidency the Tanjore District alone has a larger area under rice than Malabar.<sup>1</sup> But in one respect the rice lands in Malabar differ very much from the rice lands in most other parts of South India. For the paddy fields on the West Coast are almost exclusively rain-fed and do not depend like the paddy fields in the eastern districts upon irrigation systems. In spite of this natural advantage, or perhaps on account of it, the yield per acre in Malabar forms one of the lowest in the Presidency.<sup>2</sup> As the District Gazetteer puts it, "The real reason probably is that the standard of wet cultivation is lower than on the East Coast. Under the influence of the unfailing rains the soil responds too readily with moderate crops to inefficient cultivation, and the ryots' wits are not sharpened by a constant struggle with the forces of nature. The fields are over-cropped and are given no rest, and wastage is not repaired by sufficient manure. The grain land cultivator, moreover, is too often a pauper tenant, with no capital. He is often rack-rented, and he has little inducement towards intensive cultivation."<sup>3</sup>

In the Basel Mission Church the chief centres of paddy cultivation are Codacal and Madai. At one time all the members of the Codacal congregation earned

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1. Handbook of Information on the Administration of the Madras Presidency, p. 212.
  2. Rice in Madras by K. Ramiah, p. 186.
  3. Gazetteer of the Malabar District, Vol. I, p. 219.

their bread by farming.<sup>4</sup> The proceeds of farming were, however, found to be so meagre and uncertain that in 1875 the Basel Mission established a small weaving establishment for the benefit of the local Christians.<sup>5</sup> In 1889 the construction of a tile factory very much enlarged the scope for employment at Codacal, and converted rice cultivation into a subsidiary occupation.<sup>6</sup> In the rainy season when tiles take longer to dry and work is slack in the factory, the labourers toil on their paddy fields. At Madai on the other hand paddy cultivation forms the main source of income for the majority of members. Among Basel Mission Christians however few of those engaged in rice cultivation have janmam rights over their fields. The vast majority are tenants (of the mission or of the United Basel Mission Church Trust Associations) who possess some land, but not enough to give full employment to their families. In Appendix No. 11 very many of them are therefore classified as agricultural labourers. The average area of a cultivator's paddy flat comes to about one acre at Codacal. The largest is  $6\frac{1}{2}$  acres and the smallest about  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre in extent. The average area of a cultivator's paddy flat at Madai comes to about  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre. The largest is about 6 acres, and the smallest about  $\frac{1}{3}$  acre in extent.

It was much more difficult to get reliable facts concerning the economics of paddy cultivation than about cocoanut cultivation. For in the first place

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4. Twenty-Fifth Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1864, p. 49.
  5. The Thirty-Sixth Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1875, p. 48.
  6. The Fifty-First Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1890, p. 69.

paddy cultivation involves many more operations than are necessary on a cocoanut garden. Secondly among paddy cultivators there are few who are educated enough to be able to give definite answers. After getting the questionnaires answered the most reliable of the paddy cultivators were therefore called together for a group discussion. At this conference points arising from the answers already collected came up for consideration. When one cultivator's memory failed another came forward with the required details; and when one made a wrong calculation others were vigilant enough to correct the mistake. The materials presented in the succeeding paragraphs have thus been gathered not only from answers to questionnaires, but from personal talks and group discussions.

The following statement of income and expenditure supplied by a rice cultivator near Codacal will illustrate the economic condition of his class :—

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR A YEAR.<sup>7</sup>

1. Area ..... 80 cents
2. Nature of land—Single crop.

Expenditure				Income			
	Rs.	As.	Ps.		Rs.	As.	Ps.
1. Seeds (4 para)	3	0	0	1. Paddy (25 para)	12	8	0
2. Labour	9	0	0	2. Straw	3	0	0
3. Manure	2	0	0		15	8	0
4. Rent	4	0	0	Loss	2	8	0
Total	18	0	0	Total	18	0	0

In Malabar paddy flats are divided into orupugil, irupugil or muppugil according as they bear one, two, or three crops. Three crop lands are rare.<sup>8</sup> The first crop is sown in April when the thunder-storms which precede the South-West Monsoon have loosened the soil. As soon as the first crop is harvested at the beginning of October preparations begin on double crop lands for the second crop which ripens at the end of January. The paddy field mentioned above is capable of producing only one rice crop a year. In fact about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the rice lands cultivated by Christians at Codacal, and practically all the rice lands which Christians possess at Madai belong to the one crop variety. But different factors are responsible for this condition at the two stations. At Codacal about a quarter of the land is so low that during the South-West Monsoon too much water accumulates there. Cultivators can make use of the area only after the water has subsided. At Madai on the other hand the sandy nature of the soil makes it impossible to rear a second crop. After the rains the soil becomes so loose that irrigation cannot be attempted. If means could be found to convert at least a part of the one crop land into double crop land by devising an outlet for the surplus water at Codacal, or by making some sort of irrigation possible at Madai a

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7. All the labour necessary on this field is supplied by the cultivator and his family. But wages are calculated at current rates. The loss therefore implies that the cultivator and his family do not get adequate remuneration for their labour. For a detailed account of expenses on an acre of rice land at codacal see Appendix No. 12.

8. Gazetteer of the Malabar District, Vol. I, p. 215.

definite step would have been taken towards the betterment of some cultivators. In this connection attention may also be drawn to the havoc wrought on about 10 acres of land near the sea-coast at Madai by salt water breaking into it. At high tide water from the sea surges up through a channel which winds across the paddy field. In the month of March when the tides are exceptionally powerful the sides of this channel break, and the paddy field often gets submerged. The salt which is thus deposited in the paddy field during the hot weather prevents the seeds from sprouting later on. A sluice constructed at the mouth of this channel will withstand the flow of salt water and thereby enable the Christian farmers who cultivate this plot to obtain better crops.

In the specimen field mentioned above the output per acre amounts only to about 781 lbs.<sup>9</sup> This is nothing exceptional. Paddy cultivators at Codacal on an average get only an out-turn of about 875 lbs. per acre. At Madai the out-put is even lower, being not more than 750 lbs. "If we take up the world statistics and examine the acre yields it is found that they vary from 500 lbs. to 5000 lbs. In Japan recently, in competition for a special prize offered, an acre yield of over 7000 lbs. of grain has been recorded. The averages are over 3000 lbs. for countries like Spain, Italy, and Japan while the average is about 1600 lbs. for Madras, and only 1000 lbs. for the whole of India."<sup>10</sup> These figures show how inefficient must be rice cultivation in the Malabar Church.

The yield of the crop is controlled mainly by five

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9. One para of paddy weighs about 25 lbs.

10. Rice in Madras, by K. Ramiah, p. 186.



factors:— 1. soil 2. climate 3. agricultural and manurial practices 4. pests and diseases 5. botanical forms and varieties.<sup>11</sup> In some localities like Madai the soil may naturally be more wanting in fertilising elements than at other places. But everywhere the fertility of the soil has to be maintained and its deficiency corrected by applying suitable manures. Although the cultivator cannot control the inclemencies of weather in the same way, he may mitigate their effects by taking care to rear only resistant varieties. Besides the improvement of cultural practices like broadcasting, transplanting etc. alone will sometimes increase the yield by 20 to 25 per cent. Farmers who would obtain the maximum yield out of their paddy fields must moreover guard themselves against diseases and pests, by remedial as well as preventive measures; they must also replace ordinary seeds with high yielding strains evolved by the agricultural department, or by others.

By means of pamphlets, lectures, and demonstration plots the Agricultural Department has been attempting for many years now to bring these facts home to the cultivators in this district.<sup>12</sup> The answers given by Christian cultivators however show that some of these suggestions have not yet reached the whole population; and that the few improvements of which Christian cultivators have heard yet remain to be translated into practice. Superior strains of seed evolved by the Agricultural Department are not used

11. *ibid.*

12. Reports of the Subordinate Officers of the Department of Agriculture, Madras, for 1937-38, p. 72.

by Christian cultivators. They do not even select the seeds from their fields according to strict scientific principles. Small quantities of green leaves, cow dung and wood ash form the only manure applied. Many of those who possess oxen do not know how to conserve cattle manure properly. Organic waste is seldom converted into compost. The value of poudrette as manure still remains unrealised. Not a single instance has been found in which a green manure crop like Kolinji was cultivated on paddy fields. And the peasants are too poor to think of applying any artificial manure.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, instead of ploughing the field immediately after the second crop is harvested, the cultivators allow the surface soil to dry up and harden. Iron ploughs are not used at all; because cultivators imagine that they must have stronger oxen for the purpose.

Oxen are maintained only by those who possess the more extensive plots. The other cultivators choose either to hire a pair at the time of ploughing or to dig up the field instead. The cultivator's cattle are in an equally deplorable condition both at Codacal and Madai.

13. According to Ramiah in Spain and Japan they easily spend more than Rs. 50/- on an acre of rice field for fertilizers alone. Details of the amount spent on manures over an acre of rice land at Codacal are given below :—

	Rs.	As.	Ps.
1. Ten bundles of green leaves	1	4	0
2. Charge for bringing the above	1	0	0
3. Twenty baskets of farm-yard manure	1	0	0
4. Charge for bringing the above	0	8	0
5. Fifty baskets of wood ash	1	9	0
6. Charge for bringing the above	0	4	0
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	5	9	0

Animals belong to the puny local breed, and suffer for want of pasture. In spite of the arrangement whereby the government undertakes to give a subsidy for the maintenance of a stud-bull,<sup>14</sup> none was found to be available any where in the neighbourhood. An abundant supply of grass is obtainable in the rainy season. But cultivators have not yet learned to convert part at least of this supply into silage for use in the rainless months when the fields are parched up and the oxen roam about without sufficient food.

Rice cultivators do not complain of any pest or disease except the Army Worm and the Rice Bug. Traditional methods of combating these enemies are employed, and these seem to be fairly successful. It will however be an advantage to acquaint the peasants with the life history and habits of these destructive pests so that they might understand the significance of more up-to-date measures advocated by the Agricultural Department. The adoption of these measures no doubt will give the cultivator greater control over the pests than they possess at the present time.

Another method of increasing the yield will be to pay more attention to catch crops. No reference is made to any catch crop in the statement of income and expenditure quoted above. On a large proportion of fields cultivated by Christians in fact no catch crops are taken at all; but rice follows rice year after year with depressing regularity. There may of course be

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14. Villagers' Calendar, 1938-39, published by the Agricultural Department (Malayalam), p. 121.

some difficulty in getting water for irrigation after the second crop of paddy is harvested. But as small wells and tanks can easily be made in the paddy fields this difficulty cannot be considered insurmountable. A catch crop of pulses and vegetables will not only be a welcome addition to the peasant's diet but will also mean a material increase in his income.

The recent fall in the price of paddy makes it imperative that a determined effort should be made to increase the yield per acre. Generally speaking the price of rice has been on the descent since 1927. Throughout the period the Madras Presidency has been importing rice from Burma where the cost of production is much less than in this country. For in Burma rice is cultivated on fertile rain fed lands paying less land revenue than similar land in India. Moreover the freight from Burma is less than the cost of rail transport between different stations in Madras. Therefore the price of rice in Madras has been determined by the Rangoon market price<sup>15</sup>. As we saw in the statement of income and expenditure given on a previous page

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15. Journal of the Madras University, Vol. XI, No. 2, Article on Commodity Prices in S. India 1918-1935, by Dr. P. J. Thomas and N. Sundararama Sastry. According to figures published in the Fort St. George Gazette under the Compensation for Tenants' Improvements Act the average price of paddy (second sort) in Malabar after 1934 has been as follows :—

1934—35	13'03	Seers per rupee.
1935—36	13'87	" "
1936—37	15'04	" "
1937—38	16'14	" "
1938—39	16'45	" "
1939—40	17'45	" "



cultivators have been hit hard by this fall in prices. The margin of profitable cultivation has greatly receded. In fact at the current level of prices the cultivator mentioned above incurs a net loss of Rs.  $2\frac{1}{2}$  on his field. Or in other words the cultivator and his family do not get the current rate of wages for the labour which they apply to the field. Any attempt to improve the economic condition of the paddy cultivator will therefore be unavailing unless he is able to make up for the fall in prices by a corresponding increase in the output per acre.

Finally attention has to be drawn to the oppressive burden of rent which lies like a blight on some of the cultivators. According to section 6 of the Malabar Tenancy Act fair rent of wet lands shall be  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the difference between  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the gross paddy produce of the land for the three years immediately previous to the date on which fair rent is to be ascertained and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times the seed required for the said land for an agricultural year. It is obvious from available statistics that even in the case of wet lands leased out by the mission the rate fixed by the Tenancy Act has been greatly exceeded. For example at Madai a small plot where  $14\frac{1}{2}$  measures of seed can be cultivated has to pay a rent of 69 measures to the mission. Even if the plot gives a ten fold yield according to the tenancy act the fair rent on the plot can be only  $72\frac{1}{2}$  measures. When it is pointed out that the actual yield is about 5 or 6 fold one can understand how severely the tenant is hit. If rent is so excessive in the case of paddy fields leased out by the mission, one can very well imagine what the



situation must be in cases where the land owner happens to be an outsider who has no interest in the welfare of the community.<sup>16</sup> Paddy fields taken by Christian tenants from the United Basel Mission Church in India Trust Association and from certain non-Christian land-owners are however found to bear a very moderate rent.

On the whole the paddy cultivator's plight awakens our pity. He sticks to his little plot, not because paddy cultivation is a paying proposition, but because at present he can think of nothing better. Occasional visits from welfare workers and intermittent propaganda however will not be sufficient to lift the cultivator from the slough of despondency. The Christian peasant's fate is in many respects bound up with the larger agricultural problem of the country. He cannot achieve his destiny in isolation. Yet a permanent body which will make the best use of the expert advice which the government places at the disposal of the public, and which will work with the available organization of the Church and the mission can bring about a remarkable change. On this point the following words written by the Agricultural Commission are well worth our attention, "Next to making some one individual resident in the village itself responsible for advising the villagers

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16. It will be wrong to conclude that the mission is out to squeeze the tenants as far as they might with propriety. The mission has taken these lands on mortgage with certain funds on which they are bound to produce a certain amount as interest. The total rent the mission strives to obtain from the property is therefore controlled by the total income they must receive on the investment. Besides the rent on mission fields compares very favourably with rent on other fields in the neighbourhood.

where to go for advice, and how best to utilise their own skill and resources in improving the amenities of the village in their spare time, we attach most importance to linking the villages with the social life of the town. This can best be effected by social workers organized in societies ..... Such organization facilitates continuity of policy and steady pressure over a long period, both of which are required if permanent results are to be obtained."<sup>17</sup>

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17. Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture (Abridged), p. 60.

## CHAPTER IX

### Agricultural Labour

The sudden increase among agricultural labourers which has taken place in the Malabar Church during the present decade is symptomatic. There was a time when new conversions implied an addition to the industrial population. For the non-Christian communities around the Church were in those days unsympathetic, and the Basel Mission Industrials had to absorb the converts. With the loss of their industrial concerns in 1919 the Malabar Church entered upon a fresh stage in its existence. The congregations at Madai and Mattul which came into being after the Great War remain almost entirely agricultural. Among older congregations it is only at Chalissery and Vanianculam that we find some agricultural labourers.

The nature of the work attended to by agricultural labourers from season to season differs according to the crops raised in the locality. At Madai the first three months of the year are a period of insufficient employment. A few however are engaged in tilling the cocoanut gardens, or in bringing manure to the paddy fields. Towards the close of this period houses have also to be re-thatched in preparation for the approaching monsoon. April on the contrary forms a busy month. The fields have to be ploughed and the seeds sown. In May again men have little work. At the beginning of June, when the seedlings are transplanted, once again agricultural labourers find more employment. Afterwards however till the harvest in October

they have very little work. The last two months of the year are devoted to the cultivation of vegetables and pulses. In May and July although males get little work, female labourers are in demand for removing the weeds. At Challissery on the other hand the first five months of the year are occupied with work on the coconut, areca-nut, or cashew-nut gardens, especially in watering the trees. In June the areca-nut season begins. The labourers sit up late into the night cutting areca-nuts into thin slices. During day time of course the labourers have to attend to the drying of the slices they prepared the previous night. Wages are high for this work, but as the labourers have to keep awake practically the whole night and day, they won't be able to work continuously. In October the areca-nut season comes to an end and the labourers once again go back to the usual work on the cocoanut or areca-nut gardens, or engage themselves in petty trade.

According to Dr. Slater, taking the land of South India as a whole, on one crop land there is agricultural work for the cultivator only for about five months in the year.<sup>1</sup> To be on the safe side the author of the Report on Agricultural Indebtedness put it down as six months.<sup>2</sup> An attempt was made in the present survey to ascertain from the agricultural labourers the number of days they got work every month, and the number of hours they have to put in daily from season to season. This indeed is a difficult question for the labourer to

1. Some South Indian Villages edited by Gilbert Slater, M. A., D. Sc., p. 17.
2. Report on Agricultural Indebtedness by W. R. S. Sathyanathan, I. C. S., p. 27.



answer. He keeps no account of the number of days he is employed. His working day is not measured by the clock. Yet the replies on the whole indicate that the agricultural labourer in the Malabar Church at most gets only about five months (150 days) of employment in a year. His working days, however, are not uniformly distributed. At seed time and harvest he finds plenty to do. Between the prime agricultural operations, especially from January to March and August to September, the agricultural labourer gets little work. At busy times he may have to labour for 10 hours a day. But on other occasions it is customary to work only for 8 hours. On the whole women get much less work than men.

Wages differ for different kinds of agricultural operations. Men are usually paid 3 measures ( $7\frac{1}{2}$  lbs.) of paddy per day for work on the rice fields. Work on the cocoanut gardens, house-thatching, and harvesting may fetch him about a third more. Tilling cocoanut gardens and house thatching entitle the labourer also to the midday gruel in addition to the customary wages. If gruel is not provided, he may get an anna instead. Women receive wages at half the rate for men.

Twenty years ago an agricultural labourer anywhere in Malabar received only 2 measures (5 lbs.) of paddy as wages.<sup>3</sup> In spite of the rise by 50% the wages of agricultural labour still remain extraordinarily low. The low marginal productivity of paddy cultivation has

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3. Some South Indian Villages edited by Gilbert Slater, M. A., D. Sc., p. 155.



been partly responsible for this state of affairs. Perhaps the low wages have also contributed to perpetuate the low marginal productivity. Partly however the low wages are due to the state of slavery in which the Depressed Classes who form the bulk of agricultural labourers in this district found themselves at one time. Even after the abolition of slavery social disabilities and economic bondage have fettered their freedom. On account of untouchability and unapproachability most avocations which give employment to manual labourers remain closed to the Depressed Classes. And the perpetual burden of debt binds them with an iron chain to their masters. Under these circumstances, the agricultural labourer, whether he be a Christian or a non-Christian is compelled to accept a rate of wages that would seem hardly sufficient to hold body and soul together. Christian labourers, however, have greater opportunities to forsake their ancestral occupation and strike out a new path for themselves.

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The system of paying wages in paddy forms a matter of great convenience to the landlord. He is saved from the trouble of marketing the paddy, and keeping loose cash in hand. But it often involves a serious loss to the labourer. For the labourer has to sell part of the paddy he receives in order to purchase other things. And seldom does he receive fair measure or fair price from the petty shop-keepers with whom he has dealings. Any fall in the market price of paddy, which is often fluctuating, may moreover reduce his purchasing power. Besides, in paying wages, the employer himself sometimes uses short measure or supplies the labourer with inferior paddy.

Reference has already been made to the lack of subsidiary occupations which compels the agricultural labourers to waste most of their leisure time. During the slack season the more enterprising among the labourers at Madai and Mattul migrate to Coorg. For about five months from August to October and February to March they find employment on the paddy fields there. In addition to his daily wages the *maistry* who takes the coolies to Coorg gets  $\frac{1}{2}$  anna per day for every labourer whom he has taken. Labourers are usually paid at the rate of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  annas per day. As a rule a labourer who has been to Coorg returns with about Rs. 20/- in his purse, and a bad attack of malaria.

An account of seasonal migration into Coorg will be incomplete without a reference to certain mal-practices connected with it. Every labourer who proceeds to Coorg usually borrows about Rs. 10/- from his landlord to meet the expenses of his journey and to make some provision for the family which he leaves behind. For every rupee the labourer borrows he has to repay Rs. 1—4—0 after three months. No security is taken by the landlord, nor does the debtor execute a bond. But by intimidation and violence the land-lord manages to extract his pound. The oppression from the landlord does not stop here. It seems to be the common practice at Madai and Mattul for the landlords who lend money to take the women folk under their protection, when the men are away in Coorg. How assiduously this protection has been exercised will be evident from the incidence of venereal disease to which reference was made in a previous chapter.<sup>4</sup> It

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4. See Chapter IV.

is however gratifying to learn that conversion has made a decided change in the attitude both of the lender and the borrower. In fact by undertaking to lend money to the emigrants missionaries have contributed much to bring about this change.

Experience gained in other parts of India should warn the mission and the Church against minimising the danger which lurks in this situation. Immoralities embedded in the economic structure of society can seldom be removed without disturbing the economic background. The following extract which describes the experience of those who conducted an enquiry into the economic background of the Church in the United Provinces for the Thanbaram Conference of the International Missionary Council (1938) should make us pause and think. "It was a most painful experience which we had when we attended a gathering of village Christians in the Meerut District, and to our surprise in the open conference a few villagers stood up and said that among them—of Chamar origin—the practice of expecting the wife to earn at least four annas a day irrespective of the means she employs still exists. This has been conducive to a considerable degree of moral laxity. The connivance of the husbands does not bring these cases to light. In spite of this, we are sure, the preachers and the other mission agents must be possessing some knowledge of this pernicious practice. But if on the other hand they did not have any knowledge, it only shows how superficial and inadequate has been their contact with them, and how little they are interested in knowing fully and completely about their

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flock. When asked why the Panchayat did not take cognizance of this moral crime they replied deeply mortified, "When every one is guilty there is none left to raise objection." They said that the groups resorted to such questionable practices only on account of economic difficulties and only in extreme cases."<sup>5</sup>

It is popularly believed that caste prejudices are a monopoly of the Hindus. Nothing can be farther from the truth. At Madai and Mattul most of the landlords are Moplas. But the treatment which the Depressed Classes receive at their hands seems to be little better than what they might expect from high caste Hindus. The Depressed Classes were even prohibited from passing near a mosque situated beside the public road. A perceptible change has however taken place in the social outlook of both the landlords and the Depressed Class labourers since some of them became Christians. Now they have free access to the public road which passes beside the mosque. They have even begun to protest against oppression in no uncertain manner. But the converts from the Depressed Classes as a group will never understand what real freedom means until measures are adopted to provide them with house-sites from which the local landlord cannot drive them at his sweet will. In fact at Madai where the mission has provided a large number of these converts with such house sites their condition seems to be much better than at Mattul where most of the converts dwell on house sites belonging to their old masters. The

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5. The Economic Background of the Church in the United Provinces by E. C. Bhatti, M. A., p. 85.



landlords do not permit the converts to accept work anywhere without their permission. The converts are even compelled to work on Sundays.

Much has been done by the Madras Government for ameliorating the condition of the Depressed Classes by providing them with house sites, water supply, sanitary amenities, assignments of land, special schools, scholarships, and free hostels.<sup>6</sup> But these privileges are denied to those members who have embraced Christianity. Conversion by itself however does not make any material change in the economic conditions which call for assistance from the state. Like their comrades in other provinces,<sup>7</sup> converts from the Depressed Classes at Madai and Mattul remain subject to much the same economic disabilities as their non-Christian brethren. It is therefore absolutely unfair to deprive those converts of the assistance which the state would have given them if they had refrained from embracing Christianity. The conversion of a Depressed Class labourer cannot absolve the government from its obligations to him. At least the first and second generations of Depressed Class converts ought to be entitled to participate in the ameliorative measures undertaken by the Government to uplift their non-Christian brethren.

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6. Madras Administration 1937-38, p. 141.

7. The Christian College and the Christian Community by R. B. Manikam, Ph. D., p. 27.



## CHAPTER X

### Industrial Labour

We have already seen that manufacturing industries give employment to the largest proportion of people in the Malabar Church.<sup>1</sup> Factory hands are not however uniformly distributed over many industries; a few weaving establishments and tile factories, most of which originally belonged to the Basel Mission, account for the vast majority of industrial labourers. Calicut, Cannanore, and Pappinisherry form the chief textile manufacturing centres; tile factories which give employment to the largest number of Christians are found at Codacal and Melaparamba.

It cannot be said that industrial workers in India constitute a permanent labour force such as exists in European countries. "In fact most of the workers in organized industry are not yet permanently domiciled in the industrial centres in which they are employed but are villagers who come to the centres of employment for varying periods and whose homes are still in the native villages".<sup>2</sup> Industrial labour within the Basel Mission Church has an entirely different character. They form a permanent class of workers, such as we find rapidly growing in all great industrial centres, dependent solely on wages as a means of livelihood and wholly detached from the land. In fact owing to the peculiar circumstances which characterized the early history of the Church, Christian labourers who found employment in factories had from the very

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1. See Chapter VI.

2. Industrial Labour in India, p. 32.

beginning severed their connection with their ancestral villages. Therefore periods of unemployment tell more severely upon industrial workers in the Church than they would upon many non-Christian labourers who may yet have a lean upon agricultural occupations.

Families depending upon weaving establishments—whether handloom factories or power-loom factories—are found to be generally more prosperous than families depending upon tile factories. For in weaving establishments where the workers have to show more intelligence and manual dexterity wages on the whole are decidedly higher. The following table which gives the minimum and maximum wages per day in the different departments of a weaving factory and of a tile factory will give an idea of the difference in the standard of wages between the two industries.

The effect of disparity in wages gets very much aggravated by the varying demand for female labour in the two industries. In a weaving or a hosiery factory there are many delicate operations which can best be performed by female labourers. The operations to be carried out in a tile factory are on the other hand so strenuous and fatiguing that female workers do not

Weaving Factory	Minimum	Maximum	Tile Factory	Minimum	Maximum
	Rs. As. Ps.	Rs. As. Ps.		Rs. As. Ps.	Rs. As. Ps.
Winders-weft	0 3 0	0 5 6	Clay Department	0 2 6	0 6 0
Winders-warp	0 3 0	0 5 0	Pugging „	0 2 6	0 7 0
Warpers	0 11 0	0 12 0	Pressing „	0 2 6	0 7 0
Sizers	0 6 0	1 0 0	Drying „	0 3 0	0 4 6
Weavers	0 6 0	0 14 0	Kiln „	0 5 6	0 11 0
Weaving jobbers	0 7 0	1 9 0	Sundries „	0 3 0	0 10 0

Weaving Factory	Minimum	Maximum
	Rs. As. Ps.	Rs. As. Ps.
Finishers	0 6 6	0 12 0
Bleachers and dyers	0 5 0	0 14 0
Calandering man	0 5 0	0 12 0
Bobbin Boy	0 3 0	0 5 0
Bundler	0 6 0	0 12 0
Male Coolie	0 3 0	1 4 0
Female Coolie	0 3 0	0 6 0

have much scope for employment. The following table which contains the number of males and females employed in the different factories situated near Christian congregations will show how families who depend on the tile industry are at a serious disadvantage.<sup>3</sup>

	Common Wealth Weaving & Dyeing Works, Calicut	Common Wealth Weaving Factory, Cannanore	Aaron's Spinning and Weaving Mills, Pappinasherry	Common Wealth Tile Factory, Puthiyara	Common Wealth Tile Factory, Feroke	Common Wealth Tile Factory, Codacal	Common Wealth Tile Factory, Olavakode	Standard Tile Works, Feroke	Malabar Tile Factory, Feroke
Males	299	441	929	186	309	121	164	385	371
Females	148	240	237	19	2	53	32	7	16

3. These figures which refer to the year 1939 were kindly supplied by the Inspector of Factories, IV Circle, Coimbatore.

To what extent family incomes may be affected by the nature of the industry on which the families depend will be evident from the following table which contains the percentage of families under different income groups at Pappinisherry and Codacal. The Pappinisherry congregation depends mainly upon a weaving mill whereas the congregation at Codacal finds employment in a tile factory.<sup>4</sup>

Place	Percentage in Income groups.										
	Rs. 1-10	Rs. 10-20	Rs. 20-30	Rs. 30-40	Rs. 40-50	Rs. 50-60	Rs. 60-70	Rs. 70-80	Rs. 80-90	Rs. 90-100	Rs. 100-150
Pappini- sherry	13	45	28	6	6	2	"	"	"	"	
Codacal	32	31	19	6	3	4	2	1	"	"	2

The scope of industrial welfare is not however to be measured by wages and income alone. In order to obtain a complete picture of the conditions under which labourers live we have to examine the operation of various acts and administrative rules by which the state seeks to secure for the workmen certain minimum standards of health, safety, and comfort inside the factory. We have also to take note of beneficent activities and institutions due to the initiative of public and semi-public bodies, employers, or private organizations. A study of industrial welfare must also include all attempts made by the workers themselves through organization and corporate endeavour to

4. Of course these families include a few members employed outside. But their presence does not materially affect the lower income groups.

establish better living conditions for themselves.<sup>5</sup>

The Factories Act (1934), the Madras Maternity Benefit Act (1934), the Payment of Wages Act (1936), and the Workmen's Compensation Act (1923) form the four pieces of labour legislation with which industrial workers within the Basel Mission Church are most intimately concerned. The Factories Act lays down a maximum of 54 hours a week and 10 hours a day for adult workers in perennial factories. According to the Report on the Working of the Factories Act, out of 1290 perennial factories in the Presidency 318 factories allowed less than 48 hours a week in the case of men, and 250 factories in the case of women.<sup>6</sup> All weaving establishments and tile factories in which members of the Malabar Church are employed however work for 54 hours a week with a maximum of 9 hours per day.<sup>7</sup> There are no holidays with wages except King's birthday in one factory, and two important Hindu festivals in another.<sup>8</sup> Attention has already been drawn to the very high rate of mortality from pulmonary tuberculosis in the congregation at Cannanore. Partly at

5. Industrial Welfare in India, by P. S. Lokanathan M. A., author's preface.
6. Report on the Working of the Factories Act in the Madras Presidency for the year 1938, p. 23.
7. Statistics kindly supplied by the Inspector of Factories, IV Circle, Coimbatore.
8. About conditions in the Presidency as a whole the Report on the Working of the Factories Act for the year 1938 makes the following remarks, "Sundays, local festival and other commercial holidays were allowed to workers generally with pay in well established concerns and in smaller factories wages were paid only for the actual days of employment. Casual or privilege leave were given with pay in a few factories." p. 4.



least the insanitary conditions under which many of the members have to work must be responsible for the situation. About 48% of the workers in the congregation find employment in one large weaving establishment which does not seem to possess adequate arrangements for the elimination of dust. The harmful effects of dust upon the operative's health attracted the attention of the Royal Commission on Labour in India whose words are well worth quoting. They wrote, "In a number of factories the manufacturing processes disseminate a large quantity of dust, arrangements for the elimination of which are frequently defective. Mechanical systems which result in a constant flow of fresh air would add greatly to the comfort of the operative, and would in some cases improve his output. More important is the conservation of the worker's health, for the prevalence of dust may result in pulmonary disease. In certain manufacturing processes, particularly connected with cotton, jute, and wool the reduction of dust to a minimum should be made obligatory."<sup>9</sup>

The expenses involved in installing dust preventing machinery cannot be considered prohibitive at all. The matter was discussed by the Court of Enquiry appointed to investigate certain trade disputes at Coimbatore in December 1937. In the report submitted by this court we read, "Dust preventing machinery is not in use in any of the mills here. I suggested to such of the managing agents and managers as appeared in the

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9. Report of the Royal Commission on Labour in India, p. 56.

court to install vacuum-cleaners of the type now in use in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, Madras. I was informed that the machinery cost only £ 87. This cannot be considered at all a prohibitive addition to the capital expenditure of a mill of any size."<sup>10</sup> The bill amending the Factories Act which was passed by the Legislative Assembly in February 1940 provides for sanitary provisions relating to dust. Let us hope that the managers who have so far taken no steps to eliminate dust will be moved to action at least when this measure comes into force.

The Payment of Wages Act<sup>11</sup> proposes to secure the prompt payment of wages earned. According to this act the person responsible for the payment of wages in a factory has to fix periods in respect of which the wages shall be payable; and no wage period shall exceed one month in duration. Besides in the case of industrial establishments employing less than 1000 persons wages must be paid before the expiry of the seventh day after the period for which they are due; and in other cases before the expiry of the tenth day. No deductions shall moreover be made from the wages of an employed person except those made in accordance with the provisions of the act.

In the factories where Basel Mission Christians largely find employment wages are paid at the end of every week or fortnight. The waiting period varies from three days to seven days. As fines may be imposed only for acts and omissions which the employer has, with the previous approval of the Chief Inspector

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10. Madras, Labour, July 1937—October 1938, p. 163.

of Factories, specified by a notice displayed at or near the main entrance of the factory, deductions on this account have been reduced to a minimum. For disciplinary purposes suspension and dismissal seem to have generally taken the place of fines. And from the fear which some factory hands evinced in answering the questionnaire on labour conditions we have reason to suspect that in certain cases these punishments are, as the factory hands allege, used to browbeat and terrorize them.

According to the Madras Maternity Benefit Act perennial factories have to pay maternity benefit to women workers at the rate of 8 annas a day for seven weeks. Although the act was intended to be of service to married women engaged in industrial occupations it has often produced the opposite result. For the present enquiry shows that owing to this act married women tend to be at a discount in the labour market. The writer himself had an interesting experience in this connection. While this enquiry was in progress the manager of a factory where a strike had taken place was in need of women workers. Knowing that I had the names of all the members who belonged to the neighbouring Christian congregation his agents approached me for a list of all unmarried women. When they found they could not get enough labourers from the list next they asked me for the names of married women who were not likely to bear children. As I informed them that I was not bold enough to prophesy in so delicate and uncertain a matter I was requested to give them the names of women who had married and were without children for at least four

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years. In fact complaints are also heard that some factory managers take the earliest opportunity to send away women who get married. As long as the supply of unmarried women remains large and factory hands have no organization among themselves, it is natural that the Maternity Benefit Act should sometimes bring more benefit to those who are free from the incidents of matrimony.

The Workmen's Compensation Act forms another measure which fails to achieve its purpose in certain cases. According to this act if personal injury is caused to a workman by accident arising out of his employment, and the effects last for more than seven days, his employer is liable to pay compensation. Varying rates of compensation are prescribed for death, permanent total disablement, permanent partial disablement, and temporary disablement whether total or partial. Among the workers under survey serious accidents seem to have been rare. Some of them however complain that in the event of temporary disablement lasting for more than seven days they do not always get adequate compensation. For the rules about compensation are not generally known, and even when they are known, under present conditions it is impossible for the workman to enforce his claim<sup>11</sup>. A worker who is fool-hardy enough to insist upon his due may get his compensation and lose his employment.

The general unrest which prevailed among labourers in the district, and the nervousness with which

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11. In spite of their literacy, ignorance of factory laws among industrial workers in the Church seems to be appalling.



most factory managers looked upon any enquiry into labour conditions did not permit the present writer to go into the details of the allegations made by labourers. Whatever may be the basis of truth underlying these complaints, in order to obtain a correct perspective they must be viewed side by side with much that factory managers have done to increase the well-being and contentment of their workers. Among welfare schemes undertaken by managers pride of place must be given to the Sick Fund, Saving and Endowment Fund and the Provident Fund which form a characteristic feature of the factories managed by the Commonwealth Trust. In one Commonwealth factory 67 % of the labourers are reported to be members of one or other of these funds.<sup>12</sup> Factories which have made no provision for such funds sometimes give a gratuity when a worker with long service retires from the factory. Facilities for the workers' recreation and the education of their children are provided by the Aaron's Spinning and Weaving Mills. In this connection mention may also be made of night schools conducted for the benefit of factory hands by the Malabar Christian College at Calicut, and by the Devadar Malabar Reconstruction Committee at Feroke. Many factories have also made arrangements with tea vendors to supply refreshments inside the factory premises at recognised intervals. Employees in the Commonwealth factories who have put in the requisite minimum of attendance further obtain a Christmas present of a few yards of cloth

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12. Report on the Working of the Factories Act in the Madras Presidency for the year 1938, p. 33.



every year. No co-operative credit societies are found in any factory, but co-operative stores for the benefit of factory hands have been started by Aaron's Spinning and Weaving Mills, the Standard Tile Works, and the Kerala Tile Works.

In general housing does not present Christian workers with a problem except at Calicut, Cannanore and Pappinisherry. In the other stations factories have been constructed long after the local Christian congregation was provided with suitable residential quarters.<sup>18</sup> At the three stations mentioned above Christian workers however have to face increasing difficulties. The situation at Cannanore and Pappinisherry certainly calls for immediate attention. At Cannanore the workers are housed mostly in lines situated close to the factory in an area which forms one of the most congested parts of the town. These buildings situated on either side of narrow lanes belong to private owners, carry a very high rent, and are anything but comfortable or sanitary. Each family usually takes a suite of three rooms one behind the other. The front room which opens upon the road forms a kind of sitting apartment where they can inhale all the dust in the street; the middle room which gets neither sufficient light, nor sufficient air forms the family bedroom; the room on the other side is used as a kitchen. Latrine accommodation remains so insufficient that many of the male workers are reported to make use of the public maidan near by and depend upon the cows to clean the premises. The insanitary nature of dwelling

18. See Chapter III.

apartments must certainly have contributed to produce the high rate of mortality from tuberculosis which has already been mentioned. As the factory on which the workers depend stands in the middle of the town, it is however impossible to devise a solution which does not involve large expenditure. Perhaps under existing circumstances the worker's only remedy lies in shifting from the neighbourhood of the factory to less congested portions in the suburbs of the town. This may of course mean some personal inconvenience to the workers; but the improvement in their health will more than compensate for the trouble involved.

Conditions are different at Pappinisherry. Aaron's Spinning and Weaving Mill is situated in an area which still retains its rural character. Yet the factory has developed so rapidly that already labourers, both Christian and non-Christian, who flock to Pappinisherry for employment experience difficulty in obtaining suitable houses. But if the directors of the company or some other public body interested in the welfare of industrial labour would take up the matter, a scheme for supplying factory hands with suitable dwellings can now be launched without much outlay. A few years hence, when this station would perhaps have grown into a little town, when thousands of rupees would have been invested in overcrowded insanitary buildings, and the value of land grown considerably higher, the cost of any such scheme would be exorbitant. By acting in time the well-wishers of industrial labour can prevent a good deal of squalor and misery in the future.

The present enquiry has not revealed a single instance of any welfare work carried on by labour organizations. Probably workers in the factories under report have yet to realize what they can achieve for themselves by corporate endeavour. In other parts of India labour organizations have some remarkable achievements in welfare work to their credit. Thus the report of the International Labour Office on Industrial Labour in India states, "Welfare work is also carried on by some worker's organizations, the most notable examples being some of the Postal Unions in different parts of the Bombay Presidency, the railway men's unions, and the Ahmedabad Labour Union. Some of the railway men's unions have organized co-operative societies and various kinds of funds for the provision of specific benefits, such as legal defence, death and retirement benefits, unemployment and sickness benefits, the All-India Railwaymen's benefit fund and life insurance. The welfare work of the Ahmedabad Labour Union is carried out by different committies, which are respectively responsible for running hospitals for both indoor and outdoor patients, schools for boys and girls, shops for the sale of grain at low prices to members, restaurants for the provision of good food at cheap prices and in clean surroundings, and physical culture centres."<sup>14</sup> Leaving such fruitful fields aside labour leaders in Malabar seem to have expended all their energies in shouting the war cry against capitalism.

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14. Industrial Labour in India, p. 311.

Although workers seemed to be conscious of their disabilities at all stations, no regular trade union was found anywhere except at Cannanore. Abortive attempts appear to have been made almost in every factory to establish a labour union ; but the lack of a constructive programme, ill-advised leadership, and the hostility of the management have stifled the movement. In fact, if one may judge from the unreasoning bitterness which was in evidence among the labourers, factory managers had sufficient reason to be suspicious. For the Communists who control the labour movement in Malabar at the present time have done a distinct dis-service to the labourers whom they mean to serve by propagating the seeds of class-warfare among them. Unless other parties or organizations make it their business to supply industrial labour with the leadership which they so sadly need half-baked communist propaganda may yet do incalculable harm to the workers. Any attempt made by a responsible body to direct the labour movement along healthier channels is bound to be supported by all discerning employers and workers alike.

What the Royal Commission on Labour in India wrote concerning the need for the development of trade unions remains as true in Malabar as when it was written. The Commission observed, "Everything that we have seen in India has forced upon us the conviction that the need of organization among Indian workmen is great, and unless industry and the State develop along entirely different lines from those at present followed, nothing but a strong trade union movement will give the Indian workman adequate protection.



Legislation can act as a palliative and prevent the graver abuses, but there are strict limitations to the power of Government and the public to protect workmen who are unable to protect themselves. Labour laws, indeed, find one of their most effective sanctions in the support of organized unions. Other forms of organizations, such as works councils and works committees, serve a useful purpose when employers are well disposed, but they cannot be a substitute for trade unionism. Machinery such as industrial tribunals and conciliation boards can assist labour, but its operation is seriously hampered without organization. It is in the power to combine that labour has the only effective safeguard against exploitation and the only lasting security against inhuman conditions. Nor is labour the only party that will benefit from a sound development of the trade union movement. Employers and the public generally should welcome its growth. It would be foolish to pretend that in present conditions particular employers in particular centres cannot gain an advantage by thwarting and repressing attempts to organize, and all employers are bound to find, on occasion, that the organization of their men limits their power. But whilst the advantages to be gained from repression are temporary and precarious, those that accrue from healthy organization are lasting. Further, some form of organization is inevitable, since the need is acute and is bound to evoke a response. If that response does not take the form of a properly organised trade union movement, it may assume a more dangerous form. Some employers have already suffered severely from the lack of responsible trade unions of their workers, and



this type of suffering extends to the community as a whole."<sup>15</sup>

A discussion on industrial labour in the Malabar Church will not be complete without an account of those who are either unemployed or under-employed. As no statistics are available of industrial workers in the Malabar Church at any previous time in this decade, it is impossible to make definite calculations. From 1938-39 however we find a slight fall in the number of workers supported by the weaving and tile factories in which most of the Christian labourers are employed. But the fluctuations in the total number of workmen there do not form a correct index of unemployment among Christian labourers. For, since the Basel Mission Industrials passed into the hands of the Commonwealth Trust a definite change has taken place in the attitude of the management to the Christian employee. Formerly these factories were maintained by the Basel Mission for the purpose of providing a means of livelihood for converts and for training them in handicrafts.<sup>16</sup> Thus in 1913 out of 2428 persons employed in the Basel Mission industrial establishments in Malabar 1824 or 75% were Protestant Christians.<sup>17</sup> When these factories were transferred to an association which does not have any official connection with the Malabar Church, the

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15. Report of the Royal Commission on Labour in India, p. 322
  16. A Brief History of the Basel Mission Industries by H. Hofmann, p. 4. Also Gazetteer of the Malabar District Vol. I, p. 212.
  17. The Seventy-Fourth Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1913, p. 20.

original purpose of these industrial concerns gradually receded into the background. Today these factories not only employ fewer hands than before the Great War, but the proportion of Christian workers has fallen from 75 to less than 50 per cent. These changes no doubt have tended to create some unemployment among industrial workers in the Basel Mission Church.<sup>18</sup>

Besides, those who are employed in factories do not always find regular work throughout the year. The following table which gives the total number of working days in the weaving establishments and tile factories where most of the Christian labourers find employment will show how hard they are often hit by economic fluctuations and labour troubles.<sup>19</sup>

Year.	Commonwealth weaving and Dyeing Works, Calicut.	Commonwealth Weaving Factory, Cannanore.	Aaron's Spinning and Weaving Mills, Pappinsherry.	Commonwealth Tile Factory, Puthiyara.	Commonwealth Tile Factory, Feroke.	Commonwealth Tile Factory, Codacal.	Commonwealth Tile Factory, Olavacode.	Standard Tile Works, Feroke.	Malabar Tile Factory, Feroke.
1938	303	277	309	310	310	309	274	268	280
1939	305	233	308	300	312	306	193	277	281

No sort of unemployment insurance is however found in any factory. Indeed during periods of enforced idleness Christian labourers are at a greater disadvan-

18. Minutes of the Malabar Church Council which met in January, 1938, p. 23.

19. These statistics were kindly supplied by the Inspector of Factories, IV Circle, Coimbatore.

tage than their non-Christian brethren. For in times of distress the joint family system provides an asylum to the unemployed Hindu labourer. The more individualistic Christian worker has either to stand on his own legs or fall back upon the community. It must however be admitted that the help rendered by the Church out of its meagre resources, commendable though it might be, forms but a poor substitute for unemployment relief funds of the contributing type to which an unemployed labourer can turn without injury to his self-respect.

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## CHAPTER XI

### Standard of Living

As the majority of members in the Basel Mission Church find employment either in factories, commercial establishments or the professions an investigation into their income has not to confront that bewildering vagueness which is associated with a rural population. Two main sources of subsidiary income have however to be reckoned with. As we saw in Chapter VII many families derive an extra income, though very small it may often be, from the proceeds of the compounds in which they dwell. Moreover substantial sums may be occasionally sent home by relatives who are employed outside Malabar. Most families who possess small compounds however express inability to tell what exactly the net income from their property must be. Remittances from relatives are on the other hand so uncertain in the majority of cases that no definite calculations can be based on them. In the following table which gives the percentage distribution of families according to income groups, income from the little gardens surrounding the homes, and remittances from relatives abroad have not therefore been taken into account:—<sup>1</sup>

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1. In calculating the percentage, single individuals maintaining an independent establishment have been counted as families. Even if they are separated, however, the percentage figures will not be materially affected.

Income group.	Percentage of families.
No. income	5
Rs. 0-10	25
Rs. 10-20	25
Rs. 20-30	18
Rs. 30-40	8
Rs. 40-50	6
Rs. 50-60	4
Rs. 60-70	2
Rs. 70-80	2
Rs. 80-90	1
Rs. 90-100	1
Rs. 100-150	2
Above Rs. 150	1

The average monthly income per family amounts to about Rs. 28/-.<sup>2</sup> Compared with the average monthly income per family in other Protestant Churches in India this figure no doubt shows remarkably well.<sup>3</sup> Yet we have to note that about a quarter of the fami-

2. If all the subsidiary incomes are taken into account the average will have to be raised by about a rupee. For it will be recalled that nearly a third of all the families investigated were found to possess cocoanut gardens. The annual net profit from 'an acre under cocoanut has been calculated at about Rs. 30/- for a tenant cultivator and the average extent of a compound in the Malabar Church at below an acre. Similarly enquiries showed that 112 families who were investigated at Codacal all together received remittances amounting to Rs. 486/- from relatives employed elsewhere in 1939. Generalising from these facts we find that subsidiary sources will increase the regular income by not less than a rupee per month.
3. For example according to a survey made by the Andhra Christian College the average monthly income per family in the entire areas of the four missions studied comes to only about Rs. 12/-, the average size of the family being 6. See the Christian College and the Christian community by Dr. R. B. Manikam, p. 46.



lies support themselves on a monthly income of Rs. 10/- or less ; and another quarter on Rs. 10/- to 20. The percentage of families belonging to the larger income groups remains deplorably low. In fact families receiving an income of more than Rs. 500/- per month can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Although we cannot help wishing that the higher income groups had shown a larger proportion of families, it is really gratifying to recall the progress that has been made in the last seven decades. For in the Mission Report for the year 1872 we read that the congregations on the West Coast were generally poor, and the greater number of Christians had an income of less than Rs. 10/- a month. <sup>4</sup>

Income alone however does not form an adequate measure of the standard of living attained by a family. The comforts which a family can command with a given income will naturally be limited by its size. In order to obtain a true estimate of the standard which it is possible for a community under given circumstances to achieve, we must therefore examine the average size of a family in that community. This safeguard is specially important in India where the family "often includes in addition to the natural family of husband, wife and unmarried children, the larger family of closely related persons often including unmarried sisters, married daughters, and married sons and their wives." <sup>5</sup> Thus an enquiry into the family budgets of industrial

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4. Thirty-Third Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1872, p. 32.
  5. Industrial Labour in India, p. 273.

workers in the city of Madras (1938) showed that the great majority of working class families, in fact 77% of the total number, were joint households.<sup>6</sup> In the Malabar Church out of 1578 families investigated 475 or about 30% alone could be classified as joint families in this sense.

Even a knowledge of the average number composing a family is however insufficient for scientific purposes. For the cost of maintenance varies widely according to the age of the members and their sex. Several methods have therefore been devised of reducing data concerning families differently constituted to a common standard for purposes of comparison. In the present enquiry the Lusk Scale which was established by Prof. Lusk of America on the basis of physiological requirements of food has been used.<sup>7</sup> According to this scale an adult male is taken as a unity, a woman as '83, a child of ten but under fourteen years as '83, a child of six but under ten years as '70 and a child under six years as '50. In the discussion which follows males and females above fourteen are therefore treated as adults.

The average number of equivalent adult males per family according to the Lusk Scale in the Malabar Church is 4.29. The average monthly income of a family being Rs. 29 this will give an average of only

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6. Report on an Enquiry into the Family Budgets of Industrial Workers in Madras City, p. 12.
  7. This scale was used in connection with the Bombay Labour Office Enquiry of 1921-22, the Rangoon Family Budget Enquiry of 1926, and the Madras Family Budget Enquiry of 1938 op. cit. p. 10.

Rs. 6-12-0 per equivalent adult male. Although the figures are not entirely comparable it is interesting to note that the average income per equivalent adult male among industrial workers in organized industries was recently found to be Rs. 7-10-0 at Madras.<sup>8</sup> In order to realise how low these figures are we have only to recall conditions in the United Kingdom and the United States where the average monthly income per head stands over £6 and £7 respectively.<sup>9</sup>

It should not however be concluded that families in the lower income groups are proportionately worse off than families in the higher income groups. For we find a definite tendency for the size of the family to increase in accordance with the income. For example at Calicut where 403 families were investigated the size of the family tends to increase as follows:—

Income group.	Average number of male equivalents in the family.
Rs.	
1—10	3·23
10—20	3·66
20—30	3·88
30—40	4·51
40—50	4·93
50—60	4·31
60—70	5·07
70—80	4·08
80—90	4·30
90—100	6·04

8. *op. cit.* p. 18.

9. The average income per head for British India has been calculated at about Rs. 4-8-0 a month. See *Indian Economics* by G. B. Jathar, M. A., and S. G. Beri, M. A., Vol. II, pp. 145 and 149.

Above an income of Rs. 70/- we observe the beginning of a new series in the column indicating the strength of the family. This probably implies the emergence of a new social stratum who attempt to maintain a higher standard of life.

Property and savings too throw some light on the standard of life in a community. No family however desires to disclose the value of their property or the extent of their savings. Instead of trying to ascertain the value an attempt was therefore made in the general questionnaire to elicit how earnings are invested and what is the nature of property owned. The answers are revealing. Out of 1578 families investigated 514 possessed some land—not more than an acre on the average—and 531 owned their houses. All the families together possessed only 364 cows and 368 goats. Families which had taken life insurance policies were 132 in number. Only 175 families possessed bank accounts. Families which owned shares in joint-stock companies were even fewer, being not more than 31. In respect of provident funds alone do we observe the situation a little more hopeful. As contributions to the provident fund are compulsory in certain professions 557 families were found to make such contributions.

The paucity of property and savings stands in marked contrast to the average monthly income. For although measured by absolute standards the average income per family in the Basel Mission Church must be considered very low, it is higher than what large sections of the population in the neighbourhood seem to have been able to achieve. And yet their economic



needs have multiplied so fast that Basel Mission Christians find only a narrow margin for saving.

Statistics of debt would appear to indicate that perhaps economic needs have multiplied even faster than the community could afford to satisfy them. Statistics of debt supplied by householders have however to be used with extreme caution. For although some members considered the question about debt as too delicate to be included in a questionnaire, and therefore totally refused to answer it, many showed sufficient mission-compound mentality to exaggerate their debts, no doubt with the object of awakening pity for their assumed distress. As debt is generally considered a matter for shame in the community no attempt could in any case be made to verify the figures supplied by householders. Even to ask a man to what extent he was indebted was considered improper; to go and enquire of those who had lent whether the figures given were accurate would have been deemed atrocious. There was however one part of the community's debt which could be verified without any inconvenience. This was the amount borrowed from Co-operative Credit Societies. Comparing the total outstandings of the Christian Co-operative Credit Societies with the amount which according to those who answered the questionnaires they owed to the Co-operative Credit Societies we find that no reliance can be placed on the figures supplied by indebted families in most places. There are however some congregations which have stood the test, the largest of them being the congregation at Cannanore. As loans due to the Co-operative Credit Society which form about a quarter of the total



debt in the Cannanore congregation are found to be correctly reported, it is reasonable to conclude that the remainder of the debts also must be at least approximately true.

In the congregation at Cannanore which consists of 232 families 150 families or 65% were found to be in debt.<sup>10</sup> The total debt amounted to Rs. 17,077/- giving an average of about Rs. 114/- per indebted family or Rs. 13/- per head of population in the Church.<sup>11</sup> As the Cannanore congregation consists largely of mill-hands and, with an average monthly income of Rs. 30/- per family, forms one of the prosperous pastorates in the Malabar Church conditions at other centres are likely to be much worse. At the rate obtaining in Cannanore the whole Malabar Church must have a debt of about Rs. 1,16,000/-. By adding together the figures actually given by the different congregations we get a total of Rs. 1,32,500/- Perhaps the truth lies somewhere between the two figures.

The following table gives the distributibution of the total debt at Cannanore according to source and security:—

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10. In the city of Bombay 60% of the Christian households were found to be in debt. See the Christian College and the Christian Community by Dr. R. B. Manikam, p. 52.
  11. According to the Report on Agricultural Indebtedness by W. R. S. Sathyanathan, I. C. S. (1935) the debt per head of population among agriculturists in the Presidency may be taken at Rs. 42/- See p. 40.

Source of Credit.	Percentage of the total debt.	Security for debt.	Percentage of the total debt.
Money Lenders	28	Personal security	51
Shops	26	Immovable property	29
Co-operative Credit Society	23	Unsecured	18
Friends	11	Ornaments	2
Landlord	8		
Banks	4		

The amount due to shop keepers indicates the sum of unpaid bills chiefly from provision vendors, and the amount due to landlords indicates the arrears of house-rent. Although money lenders accounted for 28% of the total debt, instances of excessive interest are practically unknown. Only one individual mentioned paying interest at the rate of one anna per rupee per week or 325%. In all other cases the rate of interest remained usually at 12% or below.

Indebted families found it extremely difficult to specify the share of the loans utilised for different purposes. But they knew quite well what had led them to borrow. In the following table the reasons for borrowing are arranged according to the frequency with which they were mentioned by indebted families at Cannanore:—

Reasons for borrowing.	Number of times mentioned.	Percentage of the total number
1. Illness	48	25
2. Unemployment or irregular work	48	25
3. Maintenance	31	16
4. Strike	13	7
5. Education	13	7
6. Dependants	8	4
7. Trade	8	4
8. Death	5	3
9. Marriage	4	2
10. Failure in business	3	2
11. Confinements	2	1
12. Old debts	2	1
13. Journey to Africa	2	1
14. House construction, failure in kury, to buy a cow, accident	4	2

In this list education, trade, journey, house construction, and purchase of a cow alone can be considered as productive purposes. These together however give only 13% of the causes of indebtedness. Among agriculturists in the Presidency debts for productive purposes excluding trade and education were found to account for 37% of the total debt.<sup>12</sup> It is indeed very deplorable that Basel Mission Christians—for conditions at Cannanore may be taken as typical of the whole Church—should incur so much unproductive debt.

Systematic saving is the very foundation of economic progress. The paucity of savings and a large unproductive debt must therefore be considered very

12. op. cit., p. 42.

serious obstacles to the economic development of the Malabar Church. In fact the Church Council which recognized the danger threatening the community passed a resolution in 1933 contemplating certain steps to put down extravagance and consequent indebtedness among the members of the Church. The problem however is not new. In old mission reports we find it referred to again and again. As a matter of fact the following extract from the Mission Report for the year 1906 would, with very few alterations, apply to the Malabar Church at the present time:—<sup>13</sup>

“There is hardly any report in which lamentation is not raised about the indebtedness of our Christians. And the worst feature in this respect is the fact that quite a number of our pastors, catechists, presbyters, higher grade school-masters and well-paid clerks in our establishments are almost hopelessly involved in debt. We are not forgetful of the great difficulty experienced by some of our workers with large families in trying to make both ends meet. But it would be sentimental to feel any sympathy with some of our Christians, who could easily and without any self-sacrifice, lay something by for their families, and who yet recklessly spend far more than they earn. We know that indebtedness is a common Indian evil, but can Christians be excused on the ground that the same evil exists among non-Christians?

“What are the causes of this evil? Is it poverty? There is no denying the fact that the majority of our Christians are poor, and that in times of scarcity it is

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13. The Sixty-seventh Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1906, p. 41.

often very difficult for them to keep out of debt. But the most abject cases are found among those who have a good income. One of the chief causes that leads our people into debt is a general want of thrift.....To live beyond one's means has not yet become a crime in the eyes of many of our Christians. The extravagant living of some is sometimes the outcome of a tendency to imitate the European. The pastor of the Cannanore congregation writes: "Many of our people spend too much on showy dress, though their income does not allow it. On a certain Sunday, a respectable native Christian gentleman, holding a high government appointment attended the morning service in the Church. He came in a very plain dress and unostentatiously took his seat on a bench. After a while a man stalked into the Church in full European costume with a high collar, necktie, open coat, etc. and seated himself next to the official. A stranger, not knowing the position of the two, might have taken that showy dandy to be the big man. And yet this dandy gets only Rs. 13/- per mensem, while the simply dressed government official draws a salary of Rs. 400/- a month." Another Malabar pastor rightly points to the bad habit of buying every thing on credit as a pregnant cause of leading our people into debt. If all our Christians would learn to buy only things for which they can pay in cash the aforesaid evil would soon be eradicated.

"There is however yet another cause for the evil of indebtedness, and that is intemperance. There are some congregations where intemperance is hardly met with and where people given to drink are still looked



upon as degraded, but in some of our Churches drinking habits are on the increase. It is true that the majority of our drinkers are moderate and secret in their habits, and there is reason for it. Members of our congregations who have become inveterate drunkards or given public offence by their drinking are placed under Church discipline, and if they are unrepentant, they are excommunicated from the Church. But it is these moderate drinkers that are the real danger to the Church, because they still pose as respectable gentlemen and are not classed with drunkards by others."

The picture depicted in the above paragraphs has recently changed in one detail. European ways of life are not copied to-day to the same extent as in former times. In other respects time has produced little improvement. Yet one who accuses a community like the Malabar Church of extravagance must be careful to explain what the term implies. For if we grant a family's right to maintain an adequate standard of living, even the loans they take will in many cases be found insufficient for the purpose. As the National Planning Committee stated in the course of a note for the guidance of the sub-committees "an adequate standard of living implies a certain irreducible minimum plus a progressive scale of comforts and amenities. Estimates, of economists in different parts of India put down this irreducible minimum at figures varying from Rs. 15/- to Rs. 25/- per capita per month in the present value of the rupee."<sup>14</sup> In the Malabar Church

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14. The Hindu, 21 June 1939, p. 8.

the average per capita income per month has not yet risen above Rs. 6-12-0. Without borrowing therefore it is impossible for the vast majority of families in the Church to maintain an adequate standard of living. Extravagance in their case does not consist in unnecessary expenditure, but in spending beyond their means. Although by borrowing the family may for a time be able to approach a standard of living to which every man has an inherent right, by so doing they only postpone the day when they or their descendants may actually attain that ideal. For it is really by keeping a balance between the needs of the present and the needs of the future that a community gains the strength to advance.

Expenditure on liquor stands on an entirely different level. We cannot explain such expenditure by attributing it to the desire for maintaining a higher standard of life. The fact that the largest proportion of addicts are found among factory hands perhaps indicates that the majority take to it as a release from the monotony of factory life. In fact except for the toddy shop and the cinema hall factory hands find no other kind of amusement or relaxation. Temperance work within the Church would have been much more of a success if it had been coupled with adequate provision to regulate and occupy the leisure hours of industrial labour.

Those who have to put by something from an income which is insufficient to maintain an adequate standard of living must be careful to secure the maximum benefit from every pie they spend. In order to ascertain the extent to which members of the commu-

nity regulate their expenses, an attempt was made to gather details of domestic expenditure from a representative number from each income group at Calicut. As mentioned in the introduction this effort unfortunately did not awaken sufficient response from the community. Two facts however seem to be clear from the available materials. In the first place with the present average income per month many householders must find it impossible to provide their families with an adequate diet. For as the Health Bulletin points out a well-balanced diet such as recommended in it will cost about Rs. 5 to 6 per head.<sup>15</sup> As long as the average per capita income remains at Rs. 6-12-0 a month therefore large numbers in the Church are bound to go underfed and under-nourished.

In the second place even those who can afford to consume an excellent diet do not always do so. Many are so ignorant of the elementary principles of nutrition that they remain perfectly satisfied with a diet which gradually undermines their vitality. Thus for example in one of the families which kept for the purpose of this survey four weeks' regular account of the food stuffs consumed, an analysis of the diet worked out as follows in amounts per consumption unit per day:—<sup>16</sup>

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15. Health Bulletin No. 23, p. 15.

16. In this table the food value of the diet consumed by the Christian family has been calculated with reference to the tables of food values contained in the Health Bulletin No. 23, and Robert Mac Carrison's primer on Food. In estimating the adult man value of the family the scale of average calorie requirements given on p. 2 of the Health Bulletin was used. No deduction has been made for

		Diet of the Basel Mission Christian.	A well-balanced diet according to the Health Bulletin
Protein	....	94'00 gms	73'00 gms
Fat	...	93'00 gms	74'00 gms
Carbohydrate	....	634'00 gms	408'00 gms
Calories	....	3753'00 gms	2590'00 gms
Calcium	....	0'48 gms	1'02 gms
Phosphorus	....	2'04 gms	1'47 gms
Iron	....	29'57 mgs	44'00 mgs
Vitamin A (international units)	....	1049	over 7000
Vitamin B <sub>1</sub>	....	712	over 400
Vitamin C	....	60 mgs	about 170mgs

The above mentioned family gets a regular monthly income of Rs. 29/- and has an adult man value of 2'4. Their expenses on food alone comes to Rs. 16-11-0 per month, which gives an average of nearly Rs. 7/- per consumption unit. The diet however remains anything but satisfactory. The intake of proteins, fat and carbohydrates is far in excess of normal requirements. The proportion of calcium, iron, vitamin A, and vitamin C remains deplorably low. Greater attention to the composition of the diet will not only enable the family to reduce expenditure on certain items, but make their food much more nourishing.

waste in preparing the food ; for it is considered that such a deduction would be covered by the calorific value of the unspecified foods such as condiments, spices, and palagarams bought, whose food value is not included in the above list.



## CHAPTER XII

### Co-operative Societies and Burial Funds

The history of Co-operation in the Madras Presidency begins with the report submitted by Mr. (afterwards Sir) Frederick Nicholson on the possibility of introducing a system of agricultural or other land banks to relieve rural indebtedness. Mr. Nicholson's report attracted the attention of the Imperial Government who in 1904 passed the first co-operative law in India.<sup>1</sup> From the inception of the movement to the post-war depression co-operative societies rapidly increased. Although in 1908—9 there were only 180 societies in the province, by 1928—29 the number had grown to 15,086.<sup>2</sup> The general deterioration in economic conditions which then followed however undermined the stability of many societies. Thus the report for the year 1938—39 mentions only 13,759 societies in the Presidency.<sup>3</sup>

Of the ten co-operative societies in existence at the beginning of 1939 in the Basel Mission Church eight were founded during the Great War.<sup>4</sup> The remaining two had their origin in the present decade. All of them were credit societies, and based on unlimited liability,

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1. The Madras Co-operative Manual, Vol. 1, p. 6.
  2. *op. cit.*, p. 295.
  3. The Annual Report on the Working of the Madras Co-operative Societies Act of 1932 for the year 1938-39, p. 1.
  4. These societies were situated at Chowa, Cannanore, Mattool, Nettur, Chombala, Annasherry, Calicut, Codacal, Vanianculam and Palghat.



except for those at Calicut and Cannanore which being situated in urban areas have adopted the principle of limited liability.

With the liquidation of the societies at Chowa, Chombala and Codacal in 1939 the total number has been reduced to seven. Even so the Malabar Church has at present one society for every 1400 people. This ratio no doubt compares very favourably with the ratio in the Madras Presidency where we find 3449 inhabitants for every society.<sup>5</sup> The seven societies together have moreover a total of 520 members. In other words out of every thousand people in the Church 53 are connected with the co-operative movement. Here again the Church is far in advance of this province in which among every thousand inhabitants only 22 have associated themselves with a co-operative society.<sup>6</sup>

The number of societies or their membership alone however does not provide a correct index of the benefits conferred by the movement upon the population affected. These societies are predominantly credit organizations, and the influence they exercise can be better appreciated by examining their working capital. The working capital of a co-operative credit society consists of share capital, the uninvested portion of the reserve fund,

5. In 1938-39 there were 13,759 co-operative societies in the province. And the estimated population of the province in the middle of 1938 was 47,461,550. See Report on the Working of Co-operative Societies for the year 1938-39, p. 1 and the Madras Administration Report 1938-39, p. 80.
6. In 1938-39 co-operative societies in the Presidency had one million and forty two thousand members. See Report on the Working of Co-operative Societies for the year 1938-39, page 1.

deposits, and loans either from members or non-members, from co-operative central banks or other institutions. The amounts raised from share capital will not of course be sufficient to meet the demand for loans from members in an ordinary village society. Credit societies have therefore to depend mainly on money obtained by deposits and loans for their working capital. A society which finds it possible to raise a large proportion of its working capital from deposits from members or non-members must generally be considered to enjoy a more stable financial position than a society which has to depend largely on loans. For "a deposit is money offered to the society on terms fixed by the society, and a loan is money taken by a society on terms fixed by the creditor. If therefore a society has been able to attract a large amount of deposits on its own terms, it follows that it has established itself well, and has inspired public confidence. Further the encouragement of thrift is a distinct object of the society, and without thrift facile credit is more likely to ruin the members than to help them."<sup>7</sup>

The total working capital of the credit societies now existing in the Malabar Church amounts to Rs. 10,078/- It must be admitted that this figure is too low for a community with nearly 10000 members. For this amount gives a dividend of only 16 annas per head in the Church, whereas, if the total working capital of all the credit societies in the Presidency were distributed among its population each one would obtain 36 annas.<sup>8</sup>

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7. The Madras Co-operative Manual, Vol. 1, p. 29.

8. The total working capital of the Agricultural (other than land mortgage banks) and non-agricultural societies in the

Members of the Malabar Church at the present time cannot be said to have reached a stage when facilities for further credit are unnecessary. We have already seen that the total debt of all the indebted families in the community must be somewhere near Rs. 1,25,000.

The composition of the working capital moreover has to be considered much less satisfactory than would appear at first sight. The low percentage of members' deposits indicates that twenty-five years of co-operation

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF  
WORKING CAPITAL.<sup>9</sup>

Items.	Percentage.
Share Capital ...	43
Members' Deposits ...	1
Non-members' Deposits ....	25
Bank Loans ....	3
Uninvested Portion of reserve fund ....	28

have not succeeded in creating habits of thrift among the members or that by long experience they have learned the wisdom of investing their earnings elsewhere. The high percentage of deposits from non-members would seem to exclude the second alternative. But investi-

gations lead us to abandon any such hope. These deposits are made up partly of amounts invested by the mission for the benefit of Depressed Class converts, and partly of larger amounts which in the early days of the co-operative societies certain burial funds invested with them. Two burial funds

province in 1938—39 was 1056·34 lakhs of rupees. See Report on the Working of Co-operative Societies in the Province of Madras for the year 1938—39, p. 15.

9. Calculated from the statistics kindly supplied by the co-operative department. For details concerning individual societies see Appendix No. 13.

which deposited large sums of money in co-operative societies are likely to sustain considerable loss due to their liquidation. In fact money deposited by the burial funds seem to have wrought no less injury to the co-operative societies. For these amounts saved the co-operative societies from the trouble of looking for deposits by individuals or taking loans from the Central Bank. In either case the working of the co-operative societies would have been subjected to greater control than benefit funds managed by honorary workers could be expected to exercise. Moreover if most of the deposits made by burial funds have not yet been withdrawn it is only because they cannot get the money back.

According to the Registrar's report agricultural societies in the province derive 18% and non-agricultural societies 15% of their working capital from reserve or other funds.<sup>10</sup> It is distressing to find that in the Basel Mission Church co-operative societies depend on this source for 28% of their working capital. The reserve fund is meant "to meet the unforeseen losses of the societies so that each individual member need not be called upon to do so. It therefore provides a strong safeguard against the rigours of unlimited liability, and at the same time gives greater confidence to financing banks and depositors".<sup>11</sup> In order to be actually available the reserve fund should therefore be invested outside the society and not used for its own business. Under these conditions to utilize more than half the reserve fund in the business, as the societies under

10. Report on the Working of Co-operative Societies in the Province of Madras for the year 1938-39, p. 15.

11. The Madras Co-operative Manual, p. 40.



report have done, must be considered a highly objectionable procedure.

The high proportion of overdues must be looked upon as another serious defect in the societies under survey. Indeed overdues have mounted up to 59% of the outstandings and 65% of the working capital.<sup>12</sup> The post-war depression which brought either unemployment or under-employment to many industrial workers formed the prime factor leading to the accumulation of overdues. But mismanagement too has been partly responsible for the present condition. After running the society fairly well for a few years the panchayatdars grow more interested in party politics than in the welfare of the society. They fail to take prompt action against defaulters. Therefore overdues mount up, and may as in the case of societies which have been liquidated, become barred by limitation or doubtful of recovery. Co-operative societies will never succeed without proper supervision. In the words of Dr. Spencer Hatch, "There must be personal supervision all the way—supervision of the giving of the loan to see that it is for a known productive purpose, supervision over the borrower to see that he spends the money for the agreed purpose, supervision to see that he looks well, diligently and energetically after the project for which the money is spent, supervision to see that the money is paid back when due. With adequate, all the way

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12. For actual figures see appendix No. 13. The percentage of balance to demand remains at 49 in agricultural societies, and 21 in non-agricultural societies in the Presidency. See statistics given in the Report on the Working of Co-operative Societies in the Province of Madras for the year 1938-39, p. 83.



supervision, co-operation will succeed; without it, it will fail."<sup>13</sup>

Co-operative societies without the co-operative spirit are an anomaly. But the general situation in the Church cannot be described in more hopeful terms. For the societies have not always sprung into existence from a deep-rooted faith in co-operative principles. An influential gentleman or some enthusiastic well-wisher said, "Let there be a co-operative society", and there was one. When the first impulse which gave life and energy to the institution decays, when it is compelled in course of time to stand up against the blasts which the vicissitudes of fortune bring, the movement collapses; for it has no roots.

In a community like the Malabar Church where 87 % of the members are literate, and which controls its own elementary education conditions are most favourable for propagating the co-operative spirit. Instead of allowing the elementary schools to be satisfied by harping eternally on the three R's, these institutions should be converted into veritable power-houses for charging the community with light and life. If co-operative principles are made an integral part of elementary education, at least when the present generation has passed away the co-operative movement may find a more congenial atmosphere in the Church.

The co-operative movement within the Basel Mission Church will also gain by not confining its activities to credit operations alone. There are at least

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13. Up From Poverty by D. Spencer Hatch, B. Sc., M. Sc., Ph. D., p. 123.

three directions in which an extension of the movement seems to be desirable. Reference has already been made to the condition of hand-loom weavers at Nettur and Chombala.<sup>14</sup> Cheap credit and a ready market for their goods are what the hand-loom weavers need. "The difficulty of marketing is great and arises from the fact that mill-made cloth governs the price of all (cloth). It is true that the masses buy hand-woven cloth very largely on the belief that hand-made cloth is more durable than the mill-made cloth and are willing to pay a reasonably higher price for the hand-made cloth, but they will not give a price which is very much higher than that of the mill-made cloth."<sup>15</sup> If the price of hand-woven cloth can be brought down to the level of the mill-made cloth by improvements in the technique of production or the price of mill-made cloth raised by restricting its output, sales can, of course, be increased. Till then however the sale of hand-loom products will continue to be difficult. Yet co-operative emporiums such as those provided by the Madras Hand-loom Weavers' Provincial Co-operative Society will be of immense help to the weavers. This society was started with the object of co-ordinating the activities of the several primary weavers' societies and arranging for the purchase of raw materials and appliances required by the affiliated societies. The provincial society also arranges through its emporiums for the sale of the finished products of affiliated societies and gives them financial help. As the hand-loom

14. See Chapter VI.

15. The Madras Co-operative Manual, p. 137.

weavers in the Malabar Church are neither illiterate nor under the control of master-weavers, and as they produce for a distant market, co-operation holds out a decent chance of success among them.

Better living societies to control extravagant expenditure on marriage ceremonies form another desirable line of development. We have already seen that the large sums of money which are usually spent on ceremonies connected with marriage lead many Christian families into life-long indebtedness. The average man no doubt knows the disastrous consequences which follow from such expenditure, but when the occasion comes finds himself incapable of violating time-honoured customs. To individuals who desire to break loose from the slavery of tradition better living societies provide a means of escape. Every member in a better living society has to sign an agreement "to the effect that in consequence of being a member of the society he will observe such reformed customs as the general meeting may approve and will not spend more on any ceremony than the amount fixed by the general meeting; in the event of his breach of this undertaking he will pay to the society such fine as the committee may impose. The committee may impose a fine not exceeding Rs. 100/- on any member who fails to observe the customs adopted or the limitations of ceremonial expenditure prescribed by the general meeting."<sup>16</sup> As the majority of families in the Malabar Church have realised the harm done by wasteful expenditure and are desirous of a change, the time must now be considered

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16. *op. cit.*, p. 165.

opportune for making a start in this direction.

Co-operative insurance also deserves to be popularised in the Malabar Church. For among 1578 families investigated only 132 were found to have taken any life insurance policy at all. Life insurance not only makes provision against the risk of untimely death, but also forms a very useful system of saving and investment. By eliminating the stock-holders, promoters, and other profit-sharing agencies co-operative insurance moreover secures the entire benefits of the business to policy-holders. In fact it was with the object of taking the advantages of life insurance to the poor and to the lower middle classes that the South Indian Co-operative Insurance Society, Ltd., was started at Madras. The area of operations of the society extends to the whole of India. To be within easy reach of every individual the minimum share capital is fixed at Re. 1/- and the minimum value of a policy at Rs. 100/-. The rates of premium remain naturally very low, but the interests of policy-holders are safeguarded by special Government control and guidance through the Registrar of Co-operative Societies. Besides the society is governed, like all other insurance companies, by the provisions of the Indian Life Assurance Companies' Act.<sup>17</sup> When the members of the Malabar Church come to know of the facilities offered by this society life insurance will no doubt become more popular among them than it is today.

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17. The Prospectus of the South Indian Co-operative Insurance Society, Ltd., p. 2.



For co-operative insurance is not altogether unknown to the Malabar Church. In fact societies which give death benefits to meet the funeral expenses of the deceased were in existence here long before the first co-operative act was passed in India.<sup>18</sup> At the present time such associations popularly known as Burial Funds, are found in all congregations except Chalishery, Feroke, Madai and Mattul. The largest of these societies at Calicut has 525 subscribers. Rates of subscription and benefits given vary from society to society according to local conditions. At Calicut the head of a family has to pay an annual subscription of Rs. 1-8-0 and is entitled to receive benefits varying from Rs. 7/- to Rs. 25/- according to the age of the member who dies. The total collections at Calicut in 1938 amounted to Rs. 1080/-. A sum of Rs. 386/- was paid as benefits, other expenses came to about Rs. 166/-. The Calicut Funeral Fund owns no property except, a hearse, but has funds amounting to Rs. 4778/- invested either in the District Co-operative Bank or the Post Office.<sup>19</sup> The Cannanore society has accumulated even a larger sum. For their investments total about Rs. 5230/-. In all societies the office-bearers are annually elected at a general meeting of the subscribers and mostly do honorary work.

On the whole burial funds have been a far greater success within the Basel Mission Church than co-operative credit societies. Although the burial funds are not registered under the Co-operative Societies or any other

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18. The Calicut Christian Funeral Fund was started in 1887.

19. These figures refer to the year 1938.



Act, they too are based upon the co-operative principle. It is therefore interesting to examine why the one should have proved more successful than the other. Both have been managed by more or less the same kind of people. But the management of a burial fund does not involve transactions which require so much co-operative efficiency as in the case of credit operations. The secretary of a burial fund has only to collect the subscriptions, invest the money, and distribute the benefits as they fall due. He need not worry himself about overdues at all. For every member knows that if the subscriptions are not punctually paid he will lose his claim upon the society, and therefore makes it a point to pay up in time. A burial fund can fail only if the office-bearers embezzle, or the funds are unwisely invested.

It has to be regretfully recorded that both these misfortunes have taken place in certain societies. The burial funds at Chombala, Codacal and Parapperi have large amounts locked up in the local co-operative societies which are under liquidation. It is not safe to speak so plainly about embezzlement. But the unsatisfactory condition of certain societies at the present time seems to be due to the dishonesty of former office bearers. An improvement in both these directions can however be easily brought about by registering the burial funds under the Co-operative Societies Act. If they are so registered the members will obtain the benefit of a free government audit and departmental supervision.

Finally a word may be said about the scope for

development in the activities of burial funds. When the resources of a burial fund have passed a certain limit determined by a qualified actuary, it will be profitable to divert the surplus amount to carry on measures calculated to improve the health of the beneficiaries. For example a burial fund may engage a doctor whose services will be available free of cost to all members of the society. Many families belonging to the lower middle class find it extremely difficult to pay for the attendance of a doctor when somebody falls ill. Any arrangement which would make it possible for such people to command the service of a medical man by corporate effort must be considered a legitimate extension in the sphere of the society's activity and is bound to be appreciated.

## CHAPTER XIII

### Income and Expenditure of the Malabar Church

Commenting upon the economic and social trends which affect the growth of the Protestant Church in the east Prof. J. Merle Davis writes, "The Younger Churches are experiencing a two-fold pressure which is severely testing their fibre and powers of self-maintenance. On the one hand, the financial support for which they have relied upon the Western Churches has been drastically reduced. On the other hand, political developments, with the growth of nationalism and of forces that consider Christianity a danger to the cultural integrity of the nation, indicate that the Younger Churches are entering upon a phase of their history in which they will be forced to rely upon their own resources far more than in the past."<sup>1</sup>

The economic condition of the Basel Mission Church in Malabar forms no exception to this rule. Till the outbreak of the Great European War the Malabar Church was considered as a department of the mission, and depended largely on foreign subsidies for its maintenance.<sup>2</sup> When the Basel Mission withdrew from Malabar on account of the war, the Christian community they had established in this district got itself affiliated to the South India United Church. Thus the

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1. The Economic Basis of the Church by J. Merle Davis, Foreword.
  2. The Seventy-Third Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1912, p. 35.

government of the Malabar Church came to devolve upon a council of elected representatives called the Malabar Church Council, which for a time had supervision also of mission work in the district. The financial help formerly given by the Basel Mission was now made up in various ways. Generous contributions were given both by the National Missionary Council and the South India United Church.<sup>3</sup> Besides the Church Board obtained a loan of Rs. 60,000/- from the Commonwealth Trust and also withdrew large sums from certain funds which had been accumulated by the Basel Mission.<sup>4</sup> By 1926 however political conditions improved. The Basel Mission was permitted to come back to their field on the West Coast and once again began to render financial assistance to the Malabar Church.

In spite of the help given by the Basel Mission the financial situation of the Malabar Church continued so unsatisfactory that many responsible gentlemen who

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3. According to the Trust Deed whereby the Basel Mission Industries were handed over to the Commonwealth Company the Directors were bound to pay Rs. 50,000/- to the Mission Trust of Madras in order, "to carry on the work previously carried on by the Basel Mission". The Arcot Mission, the Madura Mission, the Free Church of Scotland Mission and the London Mission also rendered good financial help. Money from all these sources reached the Malabar Church Council through the German Missions Committee of the National Missionary Council, and the Executive of the South India United Church.
  4. In the audit report submitted by the Finance Committee of the Church Council in 1926 we find that Rs. 15,000/- had been withdrawn from the fixed deposits during the year under audit though the Council had sanctioned the withdrawal of only Rs. 8,000.



felt dissatisfied with the leaders of the community approached the mission with a request that they might once again take over the management of the Church. The Director of the mission who visited Malabar in 1932 however pointed out that the mission could never be expected to resume the role which in earlier days they were compelled to play. For, the income of the mission had received a permanent set-back. Moreover no Church could hope for ever to be cradled by the parent mission. Under these circumstances the Director informed the Church Council that the mission would no longer be able to support any of their pastors or finance the congregational schools as in the past. On the other hand the mission would make the income from certain landed properties available to the Church and grant an annual contribution which would be placed on a sliding scale. The Church Council would be expected with the funds they were able to raise from the Church and with the mission contribution, to pay the clergymen in charge of all congregations and to support all elementary schools specially conducted for the benefit of the Church. The Director fondly hoped that in a few years more the Malabar Church would be able to stand on its own legs.<sup>5</sup>

But even now the Director's hopes remain a distant dream. As the following table shows the mission grant has gradually been reduced by about 45 per cent.

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5. Minutes of the Malabar Church Council which met in November, 1932, p. 23.



SUBSIDY FROM THE MISSION TOWARDS THE SUPPORT OF  
THE CHURCH.

1933	....	....	Rs. 5,500
1934	....	....	,, 4,500
1935	....	....	,, 3,600
1936	....	....	,, 4,500
1937	....	....	,, 3,500
1938	....	....	,, 3,000
1939	....	....	,, 3,000

That the Church has been unable to accommodate itself to the new financial situation will however be evident from the loans which the Church Board has been compelled to take, the withdrawals made from the fixed deposit, and the retrenchment affected in the salary of schoolmasters as well as pastors.<sup>6</sup>

In order to obtain a clear idea of the financial situation it is necessary to examine the income and expenditure of the Malabar Church in greater detail. The Malabar Church follows a centralised system of financial administration. Individual congregations submit an account of all their income to the Treasurer appointed by the Church Council and receive from him any amount which a congregation may need above its collections, or pay him any surplus amount which a congregation may have at its disposal. Church contributions from members, Sunday collections, thank offerings, festival collections, fees, special collections, interest

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6. On the security of the fixed deposit loans amounting to Rs. 12,200 were taken by the Church Board from 1935 to 1939. See the receipts and payments accounts for the corresponding years and the minutes of the Malabar Church Council which met at Calicut in January, 1939, p. 12.

on the fixed deposit, income from trust properties, donations especially from the Commonwealth Trust, the mission grant, and Church contributions from missionaries form the main items in the statement of income. The relative importance of the different items may be gathered from the following table which gives the actual figures and the percentage under each head for the year, 1939.<sup>7</sup>

No.	Items.	Amount in Rs.	Percentage.
1	Church contribution ...	5697	34
2	Sunday offering ...	1797	11
3	Thank offering ...	682	4
4	Festival collections ...	809	5
5	Fees ...	197	1
6	Special collections ...	668	4
7	Interest ...	1722	10
8	Income from property ...	...	...
9	Donation ...	500	3
10	Mission grant ...	3000	18
11	Church tax from Missionaries.	478	3
12	Miscellaneous ...	989	6

"In an ideal budget, on the income side," writes Dr. R. B. Manikam "a Church should expect about 75 per cent of its income from regular Church subscriptions, 10 per cent of its income from Sunday collections, and the remaining 15 per cent from various other sources."<sup>8</sup> Although the budget of a single self-supporting congregation cannot be compared

7. See receipts and payments account of the Malabar Church Council for the year 1939.

8. The Christian College and the Christian Community by Dr. R. B. Manikam, p. 102.

with the budget of a district Church in every respect, one has only to glance at the table given above to perceive how far the Basel Mission Church in Malabar yet remains from the ideal.

The answers given by twenty-two missions to a questionnaire sent out by the National Christian Council in preparation for an All-India Conference on the self-support of the Church showed that the Indian Church is paying an amount which averages 36 per cent of its entire cost as contrasted with 45 per cent contributed by the missions and 19 per cent granted by government and other agencies.<sup>9</sup> Even without taking the income from schools and the government grant on them into consideration we however find that at the present time the Malabar Church depends on the mission only for 21 per cent of its income.

Contributions from Church members consisting of Church tax, Sunday offerings, festival collections, fees, special collections, and miscellaneous items have fluctuated considerably from year to year, and do not exhibit a steady rise in recent years.

Year.	Amount contributed by members.	Year.	Amount contributed by members.
1920	Rs. 9117	1930	Rs. 10483
1921	7095	1931	12402
1922	12615	1932	9724
1923	9088	1933	11083
1924	7134	1934	11185
1925	8267	1935	6368
1926	8556	1936	9100
1927	Figures not available.	1937	9615
1928	10448	1938	10001
1929	7470	1939	10839

It will be obvious from the above table <sup>10</sup> that contributions from members attained their peak first in 1922 and again in 1931. The lowest levels were reached in 1921, 1924, 1929, 1932 and 1935. General economic conditions must of course have had an effect upon the ability of members to pay. What the above mentioned figures indicate however is not so much variations due to fluctuations in prosperity, as occasional contractions produced by internal dissensions. The years when contributions reached their lowest levels were times of storm and stress, not only within the Church Council but unfortunately in the congregations as well. The year 1921 saw trouble among the people at Chowa, and in the Church Council the creation of a standing committee to control the Joint Board of Management.<sup>11</sup> Subsequent disputes which came to a head in 1924 led the German Missions Committee next year to remove mission work from the supervision of the Church Council. The amending of the constitution in 1927 was the prelude to further dissensions owing to which

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9. The Economic Basis of the Church by J. Merle Davis, p. 285.
  10. The figure for 1926 has been calculated from account books kindly placed at my disposal by the President of the Church Council. The remaining figures are from balance sheets or statements of receipts and payments annually published.
  11. The Joint Board of Management consisted of elected representatives from the Church Council and the Malabar Sub-Committee of the S. I. U. C. It was something above the constitution of the Church and had charge of the Church as well as mission work in Malabar. See Minutes of the Church Council which met in November, 1921, pp. 13 & 37.



ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION PER HEAD.<sup>13</sup>

Year.	Contribution.		
	Rs.	As.	Ps.
1861	0	6	6
1871	0	12	4
1902	0	15	6
1907	1	2	2
1913	1	7	6
1920	1	4	9
1931	1	8	11
1936	0	15	0
1939	1	1	6

the average income per family stands at Rs. 29/- a month this amount must be considered very low indeed. According to Dr. J. Merle Davis the per capita contribution in the Karem Church of Burma which forms one of the few self-supporting Christian

communities in Asia varies from Rs. 2 to Rs. 4, the larger amount being contributed by the less prosperous districts.<sup>14</sup>

In accordance with the Church rules every earning member among Basel Mission Christians is expected to contribute 2 per cent of his income towards the expenses of the Church. Sunday offerings, festival collections etc. are not of course included in this two per cent. During this decade however 2 per cent of the total

13. The figures for 1861 & 1871 refer to the whole Basel Mission Church on the West Coast and are taken from the Thirty-Third Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1872, p. 67. The figures for 1902, 1907 and 1913 are calculated from statistics contained in the Mission Reports for the corresponding years. The receipts and payments accounts of the Church and the reports on the census of the Church for the corresponding years have been consulted for calculating the remaining figures.

14. The Economic Basis of the Church by J. Merle Davis, p. 462.



income seems never to have been paid as Church tax by members generally. In 1939 for example all the families in the Basel Mission Church together obtained an income of not less than Rs. 5,35,400. The Church tax collected should therefore have amounted to at least Rs. 10,700/-. Actually collections under Church tax amounted only to Rs. 5,697 or a little over half of what ought to have been collected. In fact all the contributions from Church members under various heads together amounted only to Rs. 10,839/- During the last ten years moreover contributions from members have not shown an increase proportionate to the increase in their income. According to a census taken by the Malabar Church Board in 1930 the annual income of the members amounted to about Rs. 396,400. That year the Church received Rs. 10,500 as contributions from members. In 1939 when the annual income of the members had increased by over Rs. 1,39,000 the contributions to the Church showed an increase of only Rs. 350/- The tardiness with which contributions to the Church are responding to an increase in the total income of the community appears all the more disquieting when we recall that not only the total income of the families, but even the average income per head has increased during this decade.

Even without having all these statistics marshalled out those who are at the head of Church administration in Malabar perhaps know that a large section of members look upon the Church as having the last claim on their purse. To administrators who consider how best they might go about instilling the duty of Christian giving among the members of the Church the sugges-

tions made by Bishop Azariah will be of immense help. According to him "the first thing to do is to abandon all un-Christian ways, now in vogue, of raising money for God's work.

"By this we mean not only the giving up of all lotteries, raffles, plays, and concerts to make people give in exchange for a little excitement or enjoyment, we also mean the methods of assessment, Church tax and compulsory fees for the administration of sacraments now prevailing in many Churches. Along with these must also go all those penal methods of enforcing the payment of Church dues. Giving must be lifted up to a rule of spontaneity and voluntariness and all idea of compulsion by threat, of public exposure or open disgrace, or by exclusion from privileges must be dissociated from it.

"Nor should be continued the method of offering privileges and powers in exchange for the Christian duty of Giving. God has freely given Himself to us; and we should freely give to Him ourselves and all we have-asking for no other reward save of knowing that we are doing His will. Giving a subscription for the sake of earning the privilege to vote, or of attaining eligibility for membership on Church Committees ought to be discouraged and strenuously put down. Any constitution of Church Councils or Committees which makes these evils possible ought to be amended and altered at the very outset.

"Another matter to be abandoned is the compulsory deduction in the salaries of all paid workers of the Church. If it is easy for such workers to have their

offering deducted from their salaries, give the workers the chance of determining how much they desire to be deducted. Never suggest what it should be, never impose a proportion—however small it be.

"In short lift the whole subject up to the plane of freedom and make it a matter of voluntary personal decision. You will not regret the result." <sup>15</sup>

So drastic a change cannot however be abruptly made. In a community overflowing with gratitude for the grace they have received, and inspired by true missionary zeal the principles enunciated above are bound to succeed. But among a people many of whom regard the Church as primarily a social organization, contributions have to be based on less elevated motives and supported by more practical sanctions. It may not be impossible to make the Malabar Church a more paying concern on this lower level. A Church does not however live merely to avoid a deficit. Basel Mission Christians will never realise their destiny till their contributions to the Church become a free gift and an oblation. Indeed vigorous, sustained effort to inculcate a sense of responsibility for the Church and true ideas of Christian giving among Basel Mission Christians seems to be one of the urgent needs of the hour.

We have seen that for seven years after the Malabar Church became an autonomous body (1919—1926) the Malabar Church Council had supervision also of mission work in the district. As the accounts of the Church and the mission were intermixed in

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15. Christian Giving by V. S. Azariah, Bishop of Dornakal, p. 95.

certain departments it is not possible to ascertain from the published balance sheets what exactly the expenditure of the Church alone amounted to in those years. The variations in the expenditure of the Malabar Church from 1926 to 1939 are indicated in the following table:—<sup>16</sup>

Year.	Expenditure. Rs.	Year.	Expenditure. Rs.
1926	13098	1933	22396
1927	Not available.	1934	21457
1928	14413	1935	20287
1929	12388	1936	20463
1930	14904	1937	18752
1931	16822	1938	15932
1932	14762	1939	15783

The first point that will strike any one who peruses these figures is the sudden rise in expenditure after 1932. This was due in a large measure to the readjustment which the mission made in its financial obligations to the Church.<sup>17</sup> It will be remembered that in 1932 the Director of the mission informed the Church Council they must thenceforth make themselves financially responsible for all the clergymen and schools necessary for the service of the Church. Accordingly eight parochial schools whose expenses had formerly been met by the mission were in 1933 handed over to the Church Council.<sup>18</sup> With the annual income from the congregations fluctuating, the Church Council was

16. This table includes only the net expenditure on schools. For details concerning income from schools and expenditure on them see Appendix No. 14.
17. Minutes of the Malabar Church Council which met in November 1932, p. 26.
18. Minutes of the Malabar Church Council which met in October 1933, p. 28.



therefore compelled to make repeated retrenchments in various directions. Allowances paid to pastors have been reduced, and poor relief restricted. In the meantime enhanced government grants earned by parochial schools have helped to bring down the expenditure of the Church. Besides from 1937 onwards although the Trust Association managing the properties handed over by the mission has not been making any monetary contribution towards the support of the Church, they have taken over the responsibility for the repair of Churches, parsonages, and widows' lines which altogether involved an expenditure of Rs. 1,550 in 1939. At the end of 1936 moreover the Church Council stopped the publication of the Doothica, a monthly journal which had never been a paying concern. Thus by various means the expenses of the Church have been brought down from the high level where it stood in 1933. But even now the budget session of the Church Council forms a melancholy struggle to make both ends meet.

From a study of Church budgets collected by Christian Colleges for the Tambaram Conference of the International Missionary Council (1938) Dr. R. B. Manikam has suggested the following percentage allotments in the ideal budget of a self-supporting congregation:—<sup>19</sup>

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19. The Christian College and the Christian Community by  
Dr. R. B. Manikam, p. 108.





many of the items grouped together as miscellaneous are devoted to evangelistic ends. Evangelistic campaigns conducted by individual congregations or families moreover find no place in the Church's statement of expenditure.

The percentage of money spent on the support of pastors may look satisfactory. It must however be remembered that in order to reach this figure drastic retrenchments had to be made in the allowances given to pastors. Clergymen in the Malabar Church are not unmarried, and for their education and training certainly not overpaid. Permanent retrenchments in their salary are therefore likely to undermine their efficiency, and make it difficult to obtain suitable candidates for the ministry in the future. Instead of having an ill-paid and inefficient but numerous ministry, it will be more desirable to reduce the number of trained clergymen and depend more largely on lay leadership. As we read in the findings of the World Missionary Conference held at Tambaram (1938) "In the vast rural fields of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, with their low economic level and scarcity of paid Christian workers, the only hope for the firm planting and growth of the Church in village communities is the recognition of the immense possibilities in the development of voluntary lay service. This means that the enlistment, training, and supervision of lay volunteers must become the very centre of the Church's programme not only for the Churches so fortunate as to have their own paid leaders, but still more for the greater number of village Church fellowships which

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receive only occasional visits from a full-time Christian worker." 20

Details concerning administration expenses which amount to about 12 per cent of the total expenditure are given below. It will be evident from the table that expenses under this item have considerably increased since 1933.

#### ADMINISTRATION EXPENSES 21

	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1 Travelling							
Church Council meeting	171	181	60	562	297	326	212
Joint Presbytery	42	15	8	5	20	14	3
Board meeting	108	117	169	264	356	207	210
Miscellaneous	165	182	206	211	292	215	289
2 Printing & Stationery	180	164	261	183	208	215	116
3 Postage	85	106	88	80	121	111	159
4 Establishment	96	192	240	216	219	158	154
5 S. I. U. C., M. R. C. S.	145	110	85	100	100	100	100
6 Audit				20	75	40	40
7 Miscellaneous	73	143	100	352	185	512	113
8 Transfers			275	98	80	72	259
9 Synod meeting							100
10 General Assembly meeting							80
Total....	1064	1210	1491	2090	1953	1970	1837

The increase is particularly noticeable under travelling and transfer. As long as such a change is accompanied by greater efficiency in administration perhaps no complaint can be made against the increase. Opinion is

20. The World Mission of the Church, p. 83.

21. The discrepancy in the totals is due to the omission of annas and pies under the different items.

bound to be divided upon the advantages that have accrued to the Malabar Church by spending more under the above mentioned heads. There is however one item for which all will agree a larger amount ought to be assigned. The Executive Committee of the Malabar Church Council has an office, but no permanent staff. As members of the Church Board are all honorary workers who have to attend to their own professions the absence of a permanent staff in the office has led to considerable inefficiency. The records in the office remain in a disorganized state. The continuity of administrative experience ceases every time a new board comes into office. A permanent staff even if it consists of only one qualified clerk, will undoubtedly add much to the efficiency of the administration.

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In conclusion attention has to be drawn to a defect which has long been unobserved, but which seems to undermine the whole financial structure of the Malabar Church. The accounts in the different congregations are not subjected to an annual audit. Of course according to the constitution of the Church it is the Treasurer's duty to audit the accounts maintained by the local presbyteries. Being an honorary worker the Treasurer however seldom finds time to perform the task. Nor is it easy under present circumstances to find the money for his inspection visits. Consequently presbyteries fail to receive that supervision which is so essential for efficient management. What glaring irregularities may take place under the present system will be evident from the trouble which recently took place in the Calicut Church where, owing to mistakes

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which were detected in the accounts, even the election to the presbytery had to be cancelled. Collections in the different congregations are bound to improve if the accounts maintained by every presbytery are annually audited, not necessarily by a professional auditor, but by a reliable layman in the neighbourhood, and the auditor's report together with the Treasurer's remarks thereon is given sufficient publicity in the Church.



## CHAPTER XIV

### Communal Wealth—Trust properties and the Fixed Deposit

Before the Malabar Church became an autonomous body the expenses of the community were met partly from the District Church Fund, and partly from the Local Church Funds.<sup>1</sup> In addition to other sources, these funds derived a considerable income from Church lands or by interest on capital invested. The Church lands were either a gift from the well-wishers of the mission or acquired by them so as to provide residential quarters and a means of livelihood for early converts. Capital investments consisted of sums set apart for definite purposes. As the Malabar Church was however only a department of the mission when the Great War broke out, these landed properties and capital investments along with other assets came to be taken over by the Custodian of Enemy Property.<sup>2</sup>

According to an order of the Governor General in Council the Custodian of Enemy Property transferred these landed properties by an indenture to a trust called the Mission Trust of Southern India.<sup>3</sup> As doubts had arisen and were likely to arise about the validity of these and other similar transactions the Enemy Missions

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1. Constitution and Rules of the Basel Mission Church in India (1902), Section 197.
  2. Orders made by the Governor General of India in Council numbered 3350 & 3351 and bearing date 22nd May, 1919.
  3. Order made by the Governor General of India in Council numbered 1558 and bearing date 25th August, 1919.

Act of 1921 was passed by the Indian legislature. This act among other things validated the indenture whereby the Custodian transferred the mission properties and constituted the above-mentioned trust into a body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal who might sue and be sued by their corporate name.

The income from the properties in Malabar was annually handed over by the Mission Trust of Southern India to the Joint Board of Management to support the work which had previously been carried on by the Basel Mission in the district. But the administration of the trust properties seems to have awakened considerable dissatisfaction in the Church at that time. For in a resolution passed by the Malabar Church Council in 1926 we read, "As the Church has incurred great loss during the last few years on account of rent in arrears becoming time-barred, and in other ways, and as there is reason to entertain grave suspicions about the sale of trees conducted in 1924, we find the present administration of the property to be unsatisfactory. Therefore we request the Mission Trust of Southern India to conduct an enquiry into the management of property during the last six years and about the sale of trees and to make a more satisfactory arrangement for the supervision of the property."<sup>4</sup>

From 1927 onwards the income from the trust properties was paid to the Basel Mission who had resumed responsibility for Mission work in Malabar, and thus become the beneficiary of the Trust.

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4. Minutes of the Malabar Church Council which met in February, 1926, p. 5.

Four years later the Mission Trust of Southern India went a step further and with the previous consent of the Governor General in Council transferred the properties to the Basel Mission in India.

Although the whole of these properties had originally remained in the name of the Basel Mission, the proceeds were not in those days used entirely for evangelistic purposes. In the accounts of the mission a certain part had been demarcated as Church properties, and the income from this portion had always been used for the benefit of the Church. Therefore in 1927 the Church Council approached the mission for a share of the income they received from the Mission Trust of Southern India. The Church Council moreover suggested that when the Mission Trust returned the properties what had been demarcated as Church properties in the accounts of the mission ought to be placed directly under the control of the Malabar Church.<sup>5</sup>

Accordingly in 1931 when the Basel Mission got back the properties from the Mission Trust of Southern India the matter came up again for active consideration. Instead of placing the properties which were intended for the benefit of the Church under the administrative jurisdiction of the Church Council it was finally resolved to create a new association to take charge of the properties not only in Malabar, but in the adjoining districts as well upon trust for the Basel Mission Churches in Malabar, South Canara, and South Mahratta. The considerations which led to the

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5. Minutes of the Malabar Church Council which met in May, 1927, p. 9.

formation of this Trust Association and its relationship with the District Churches are described as follows in the proceedings of the First Synod:—

“The Trust Association was formed with a view to meet certain definite needs. First, it serves to make the distinction clear, on a legal basis, between mission properties on the one hand and properties held in trust for the Church, i. e. Trust properties. Though in the account books of the Mission the distinction between Mission and Church properties had always been maintained yet the fact that the title deeds of all the properties stood in the name of the General Treasurer of the Mission who also paid the government assessment for all the properties was liable to create confusion and affect the interests of the Church adversely, as it did when the Great War broke out in 1914 and all properties of the mission and Church alike were confiscated by the government. Now that the Trust has been formed such a confusion can never arise in as much as the distinction between the aforesaid two sets of properties has been legally established. Secondly this arrangement facilitates the further transfer of properties for the benefit of the Church, as for example, in case another war should break out, which God forbid, or some other contingency arise which makes it impossible for the mission to continue to hold and administer its properties in India or in case the mission is going to make a voluntary transfer of some more of its properties to meet the growing financial responsibilities of the Church in India. In all these cases a transfer could now be effected without undue delay, and prolonged

negotiations and with very little expenditure. Thirdly it was also the intention of the originators of the Trust Association to release the pastors and elders for the performance of their legitimate spiritual duties unhampered by problems and disputes relating to property which used to occupy much of their time and energy. Now that the Trust Association has been made responsible for the administration of the transferred properties, it should certainly provide great stimulus to the spiritual work of the Church.

“The Trust Association was registered on 28-8-34 as a limited company under the Indian Companies’ Act. It has become an independent body with a constitution of its own. It is necessary for us to understand clearly what this means. In some quarters fears and misgivings have arisen and opinions have been from time to time expressed that the formation of the Trust Association has deprived the Church of all its properties and placed it at the mercy of the Trust Association in matters connected with property administration. A clear understanding of the constitution and the working of the Trust Association would help to dispel these fears and contribute towards that co-operation between the Church and the Trust Association which is essential for the success of Trust Administration. First, if you examine the Articles of Association, you will find the membership of the Trust Association consists of thirteen persons of whom nine are Church representatives. This means that it is the Church that makes the largest contribution in the administration of the Trust properties. The Trust



Association is really worked by the Church through its representatives. This is more so in the Committee of Management which is the executive of the Trust Association. At present it consists of seven members, all of whom except one are Indians and members of the United Basel Mission Church in India. These considerations must suffice to dispel the illusion that the Trust Association is an irresponsible body with no interest of the Church at heart. Secondly, the relation between the Trust Association and the Church is that of trustees and beneficiary. The trustees are bound to use the income of the properties entrusted to their care for the use of the Church. This has been guaranteed by the Memorandum of Association where the objects for which the Association is established are enumerated. Such being the case the Trustees cannot divert the use of the income from those properties to any other purpose; much less can they use it as they like, as some people imagine. They are by law bound to employ it for purposes to promote which they have been appointed. Further, the registered Transfer Deed which conveyed the properties to the Trust Association, contains the provision that the income of the properties of any one district must, as far as possible, be used for the benefit of the Church of that district only. This stipulation guarantees that the Church of a district can always count upon receiving the income of the properties of that district, as it has done hitherto. Moreover the said Transfer Deed restricts the powers of the trustees in respect of the sale, mortgage and lease of trust properties extending over five years. Such transactions cannot be effected without their securing

the consent of the Church Councils concerned. Again, the Home Committée which inaugurated this scheme has reserved to itself, as appears from the above-said Transfer Deed, the right to revoke, modify or make a new trust in case this Trust Association should prove a failure. Thus the Trust Association is being closely watched by the Mission, its liberties have been circumscribed by safeguards and its administration is regulated by a well thought-out constitution. In these ways the interests of the beneficiary, viz. the Church, have been carefully protected. Thirdly, it is important for us to realise that the success of the Trust Administration, to a large extent depends upon the co-operation of the Churches. No doubt the Trust Association is an independent body with a constitution of its own; it appoints its own officers, managers, attorneys, sub-committees, agents etc; it uses its own methods and has recourse to its own measures in the administration of Trust properties. There is no doubt also that the final responsibility in all matters rests in it. But this does not mean that it should ignore the advice, guidance and accumulated experience of local Churches in the administration of trust properties. There can be no doubt that the success of its work would largely vary according to the measure of local support it is able to command. In carrying out improvements and repairs, in collecting rent, in settling disputes, the Trust Officers and agents cannot ignore the experience of local Churches. The local Churches and presbyteries on the other hand need realise that the Trust Association has duties and responsibilities laid upon its shoulders by law and that it is the body that is finally responsible

for all decisions connected with the management of trust properties. Such being the case the local Church should not attempt to dictate to the Trust Association and assume an attitude of non-cooperation in case the Association should not be able to give effect to all their suggestions. With the single aim of promoting the welfare of the Church both sides should co-operate in a spirit of mutual helpfulness and forbearance. It is only then that the Church would be able to reap the best fruits".<sup>6</sup>

The Trust properties in Malabar have been valued at Rs. 1,99,536/- and according to statistics supplied by the attorney are distributed as follows:—

No.	Name of Place.	Janman Land in Acres.	Govt. & Janma-bhogam in Acres.	Kanam land in Acres.	Total in Acres.
1	Chirakkal	....	....	9'17	9'17
2	Cannanore	1'66	...	....	1'66
3	Chowa	59'14	....	2'92	62'06
4	Nettur	13'71	....	....	13'71
5	Tellicherry	....	0'41	....	0'41
6	Chombala & Kandapankundu	20'61	....	12'16	32'77
7	Moorat	15'09	0'13	....	15'22
8	Padrekad	4'56	....	0'44	5'00
9	Quilandy	5'37	....	....	5'37
10	Calicut, Puthiyara, Elathur	3'89	0'40	....	4'29
11	Codacal	14'21	....	144'95	159'16
12	Paraperi	81'90	....	....	81'90
13	Chalisseri	1'42	....	1'97	3'39
14	Vanianculam	....	....	23'22	23'22
15	Ottapalam	....	....	2'65	2'65
16	Melparamba	9'08	....	....	9'08
17	Palghat	0'25	1'16	0'94	2'35
18	Panayur & Athicode	1'74	....	0'19	1'93
19	Vadakancheri	....	....	5'22	5'22
Total		232'63	2'10	203'83	438'56

6. Proceedings of the First Synod of the United Basel

The estimated annual income from the properties is about Rs. 4,700/- in round numbers, and the estimated annual expenditure about Rs. 3,000/-.<sup>7</sup> The net income from the properties should therefore amount to about Rs. 1,700/- As the following table will show the Church has never, since the inception of the trust, obtained from these properties the full income they are entitled to receive:—

Mission Church in India, 1936, p. 61. The Synod forms the connecting link between the Basel Mission Churches in Malabar, South Canara, and South Mahratta. It contains representatives of the three district Churches, and the mission.

7. According to the budget for 1939 the estimated income and expenditure were as follows:—

INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
1. Rents	Rs. 4538	1. Office expenses	Rs. 475
2. Sale proceeds	„ 150	2. Repairs	„ 125
		3. Municipal taxes	„ 162
		4. Govt. assessments	„ 1263
		5. Janmy's rent	„ 273
		6. Supervision charges	„ 200
		7. Legal expenses	„ 300
		8. Renewals	„ 400
	<u>4688</u>		<u>3198</u>
		Surplus	1490
		<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>4688</u>

On the income side collection of arrears and on the expenditure side amounts set apart for repairs to Church buildings, parsonages etc. and for payment of commission in arrears have been omitted.

## INCOME FROM TRUST PROPERTIES.

YEAR.	AMOUNT IN RUPEES.
September 1934—August 1935.	.... 493
September 1935—August 1936.	.... 448
September 1936—August 1937.	.... 1054
September 1937—August 1938.	.... 291
January to December 1939	.... 1550

From 1937 onwards instead of making a money contribution to the Church Council, the Trust took over the responsibility for keeping the Church buildings, parsonages, and widows' lines under repair. The figures shown against 1937, 1938 and 1939 are therefore the amounts disbursed by the trust on account of the repairs they had to make.

Many circumstances have contributed to create this deplorable situation. Before the Great War when the properties were managed directly by the Basel Mission it was the custom to deduct rent like the Church tax from the salary or wages paid to those who were employed either in mission service or in the mission factories. The liberation which came to the tenants when the properties passed into the hands of the Mission Trust of Southern India coincided with a period of falling incomes and acrimonious dissensions in the Church. Attorneys and their clerks changed so often that new office-bearers had hardly time to feel the ground before they were replaced. Consequently the administration of these properties became extremely inefficient and arrears of rent rapidly mounted up. A large part of this amount moreover became irrecoverable either because legal action was not taken in



time or the parties were insolvent.<sup>8</sup> At the end of 1939 the accumulated arrears of rent stood at Rs. 18,675/- Even now owing to financial difficulties the Attorney is unable to take legal action against recalcitrant tenants. Carrying these arrears forward from year to year moreover prevents some tenants from clearing their current dues. When a tenant finds that whatever payments he may make will only go towards old arrears which he can perhaps never hope completely to wipe off he is tempted not to pay at all. It is high time to liquidate these arrears either by cancelling them in deserving cases, by converting them into long-term loans which may be cleared in instalments or in refractory cases by eviction. Any effort made to improve the standard of cultivation or reduce the rent where it is found to be excessive will also lead to greater promptness in the payment of dues. For as we saw in Chapter VII there is much scope for improvement in both directions.

There are people who consider that it was both unnecessary and imprudent to hand over the properties to a trust association. They believe that these properties would have been in a far more flourishing condition, if only the management had passed to the Church Council. It is of course impossible to be absolutely certain about what might have been. But the question whether an ecclesiastical body like the Church or the mission should hereafter take direct responsibility for the management of any landed pro-

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8. Minutes of the Malabar Church Council which met in April 1937, Appendix C.

perty in Malabar needs to be carefully considered. To condemn management through a trust association because the Mission Trust of Southern India met with scant success in Malabar would be a serious mistake. Exceptional circumstances confronted the Trust Association in Malabar. In fact a trust association properly constituted should normally be more competent to deal with the administration of property than an ecclesiastical body encumbered by extraneous considerations. For the property has necessarily to be managed as a business proposition rather than as philanthropy. It takes a certain amount of hardness to insist on the payment of rent and the repayment of loans. Ecclesiastical dignitaries and missionary leaders are not usually cut out for this job.

In addition to the trust properties the communal wealth of the Malabar Church includes a sum of Rs. 33,000/- deposited in the Co-operative Urban Bank, Calicut. This amount forms the residue of certain funds originally deposited by the Basel Mission in their industrial concerns.

When the Joint Board of Management took charge of these funds in 1922 the total sum amounted to Rs. 81,500 and was constituted as follows:—<sup>9</sup>

		Rs	As.	Ps.		Rs.	As.	Ps.
Widow's Fund	....	9,773	3	7				
Interest	....	226	12	5		10,000	0	0
		<hr/>				<hr/>		

9. Proceedings of the meeting of the Board of Management S. I. U. C., Malabar, held on 30th December, 1921.

		Rs.	As.	Ps.		Rs.	As.	Ps.
Poor funds	....	12,951	11	10				
Interest	...	48	4	2	13,000	0	0	
Church Funds	....	48,693	8	5				
Another Church Fund		502	11	1				
District	„ „	1,007	3	10				
Interest	....	91	8	8	50,300	0	0	
Another Chapel Fund.		1,712	12	6				
Interest	....	51	6	2	1,764	2	8	
Burial Funds	....	3,009	10	4				
Interest	....	90	4	8	3,099	15	0	
<i>General Purposes Fund.</i>								
Pastor's House	....	1,303	4	5				
Lace School	....	616	3	7				
Refund of Stephen's								
Loan	....	670	0	10				
Centenary Fund	....	17	0	0				
Colporteur's Fund	....	432	15	0				
Plague Fund	....	270	0	0				
Hospital Fund	....	26	6	6	3,335	14	4	
Total	....				81,500	0	0	

Owing to withdrawals, some authorized by the Church Council and others not, which the Board of Management made in order to meet the current expenses of the Church the amount was reduced by 1927 to Rs. 51,200/- Till 1934 there was no further reduction in the amount. Afterwards withdrawals continued again till the amount dwindled down to Rs. 35,000/- by 1938.

In the meantime the manner in which funds which were originally accumulated for definite purposes had been withdrawn by the Church Board to meet current expenses of administration produced deep resentment among a section of the Church. Finding that with a secure majority the Board of Management could afford to flout any criticism that was made against their policy some of the discontented members took the matter to a civil court. The petitioners prayed for an injunction restraining the Church Board from withdrawing any further amount from the deposit. Before the controversy was argued out in the court the parties however came to a compromise. In accordance with the terms of this compromise no part of the fixed deposit except the annual interest upon it can be used for the current expenses of administration either by withdrawals, or by loans taken on its security. Withdrawals may be made only for increasing the capital resources of the Church. Besides, the Church Council is bound by the agreement to add a sum of at least Rs. 100/- a year to increase the amount of this deposit.<sup>10</sup>

In 1939 a sum of Rs. 2000/- was withdrawn for building a church at Pappinisherry and for improving a new cemetery at Cannanore.

The compromise concerning the fixed deposit marks a turning point in the financial history of the Church. Till the present time the Church Council and

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10. Minutes of the Malabar Church Council which met in January 1939, p. 15.

its executive have been content to drift along. As the fixed deposit could always be relied upon to resolve any financial difficulty they had no incentive to make a comprehensive study of the Church's situation, or any permanent re-adjustment to stabilise its financial structure. Now that the Board of Management is compelled to meet current expenses with current income some furious thinking and energetic action cannot be further delayed.

In conclusion a word may be said about certain funds which individual congregations have accumulated, but which do not find a place in the accounts of the Church Council. These are meant for Church building or other purposes of a like nature in which individual congregations are interested. The mismanagement of such funds in a certain congregation has recently led the Church Council to appoint a committee to enquire into the extent of these funds and to regularise their administration.



## CHAPTER XV

### The Basel Mission Industries

Reference has already been made to the circumstances which led the Basel Mission to establish industrial concerns on the West Coast. In early days caste prejudice was so strong that people desiring to embrace Christianity had to make heavy sacrifices. They were regarded as outcastes by their community, and lost their employment, as well as all pecuniary help from relatives or friends. The missionaries were thus compelled to find a means of livelihood for their converts.<sup>1</sup>

In 1852 while the members of the Home Committee were considering the appeals for help sent by missionaries in India on behalf of their converts some influential Christian merchants in Basel came forward and organized an 'Industrial Commission' which had its origin as a department of the mission. The dimensions which the organization assumed soon placed it however outside the function of a missionary society. Accordingly in 1882 the 'Industrial Commission' was incorporated in the Basel Mission Trading Company, a joint stock concern registered under the Swiss laws in 1859 for the purpose of assisting the mission in their work. This company raised sufficient capital to establish beneficent industries in India, and on the west coast of Africa, and thereby gave work to the converts made by

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1. A Brief History of the Basel Mission Industries by H. Hofmann, p. 4.

the Basel Mission. After deducting a small part to be paid as dividend to the shareholders the entire profit from the industries was utilised for the general work of the above society.<sup>2</sup>

The relation between the Basel Mission and the Trading Company was placed on a different basis by the company's statutes adopted in 1917. According to the new arrangement the annual profits were applicable in paying a dividend of 5 per cent for the year upon the shares, and any balance was to be handed to a committee of trustees for certain religious purposes defined in the said statutes. In the event of the liquidation of the Basel Mission Trading Company, any assets remaining after discharging its debts and liabilities and repaying the nominal amount of the shares were, by virtue of the statutes of 1917, payable to the Committee of Trustees for the purpose of their trust.<sup>3</sup>

After accumulating large reserves and drastically writing down the value of its properties the Basel Company is understood to have been able to hand over to the mission for some years before the Great War upwards of £20,000 a year. In fact the company worked in close co-operation with the mission and continued their policy of giving employment to local Christians. The following table contains a list of the factories under the Basel Trading Company in Malabar, and the number of Christians and non-Christians employed there in 1913:—<sup>4</sup>

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2. *op. cit.*, p. 22.

3. Prospectus of the Commonwealth Trust Ltd., p. 2.

4. The Seventy-Fourth Report of the Basel Evangelical Mission in South-Western India for the year 1913, p. 20.

Establishments.	Stations.	Employees.		
		Members of the Basel Mission.	Out- siders.	Total.
Weaving Establishment	Calicut.	616	15	631
" " Branch	Codacal.	42	—	42
Weaving Establishment	Cannanore.	454	8	462
" " Branch	Chombala.	88	—	88
" " " "	Tellicherry.	71	—	71
Tile Works ....	Calicut.	131	126	257
" "	Feroke.	65	252	317
" "	Codacal.	234	48	282
" "	Palghat.	123	155	278
Total....		1824	604	2428

Though the nationals of of a neutral state (namely Switzerland) the Basel Mission Trading Company came technically within certain emergency legislation passed in India at the commencement of the Great War. They were duly licensed to carry on their work, and did so to the satisfaction of the Government authorities. But in May 1919 i. e. six months after the Armistice, by an order made by the Governor-General in Council in exercise of the powers conferred by section 7 of the Enemy Trading Act of 1916, these properties were vested in the Custodian of Enemy Property for Madras and Coorg.<sup>5</sup>

5. Order number 3349 dated 22nd May 1919. But the Basel Mission Trading Company never acquiesced in this procedure. They have been advised by eminent lawyers that the confiscation of the property was against international law. They still claim that as a matter of natural justice the properties should be restored to them. In fact, compensation has been given to the Company by the Colonial Government for their business on the Gold Coast

In pursuance of another order made by the Governor-General in Council<sup>6</sup> the said custodian transferred the property to the Mission Trust of Madras by an indenture dated 26-1-20. According to this indenture<sup>7</sup> the trust premises are to be administered and the profits or the income thereof applied, "for the benefit of any such missions or mission Churches or Church as heretofore mentioned or of such other missions or mission Churches or for such other purposes as may be approved of by the Governor-General in Council in accordance so far as may be and is permissible as aforesaid with the principles and practice heretofore observed or followed by the Basel Mission Company."

The same year, with the approval of the Governor-General in Council, the Mission Trust of Madras transferred the property by an indenture to the Commonwealth Trust Limited. This company was formed in England primarily for the purpose of taking over the business previously carried on by the Basel Mission Trading Company. In the prospectus of the Commonwealth Trust, a copy of which has been filed with the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies, England, we read, "In view of the great value of the educational work carried on by the Basel Company on the Gold Coast, the Secretary of State for the Colonies has

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in Africa. See letter dated 18-2-35 about Basel Mission Industrials published in the Guardian by McDonell Jackson of Messrs. J. M. McDonell, Jackson & Co., Solicitors and Parliamentary Agents.

6. Order Number 1556 dated 25th August, 1919.
7. Registered at Madras on 25th June, 1920, being Serial No. 2035 of 1920 in Registration Book No. 1 of the Office of the Registrar of Madras, Chingleput.

decided that its business and work shall be continued, provided that adequate guarantees be furnished that the work will be carried on as closely as possible on similar lines and for similar purposes, but under British instead of foreign control. To this end the Commonwealth Trust, Limited, has been formed and registered with a constitution approved by the Secretaries of State for the Colonies and for India.....The Secretary of State for India has approved the constitution of this company in view of the negotiations which are pending for the purpose of obtaining the assent of the authorities in India to the transfer to this company of the whole or some part of the assets and undertaking of the Basel Company in India on similar lines.”<sup>8</sup>

In accordance with the terms on which the Basel Mission Industries were transferred from the Mission Trust of Madras to the Commonwealth Trust Limited, the shareholders of the Commonwealth Trust shall retain out of the net profits a sum sufficient to provide a net fixed cumulative dividend of 5 per cent per annum upon the share capital paid up for the time being, the balance of the profits being handed over to the Trustees of the “surplus profits.” The surplus profits handed over to the Trustees are to be applied by them for the benefit of the native population of the countries in which the profits are earned, and for the promotion of the religious, moral, intellectual, and industrial education and welfare of such native populations. The Trustees of the Surplus Profits are to be appointed as to one half by the Directors and as to the

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8. Prospectus of the Commonwealth Trust Limited, p. 3.



remaining half by the Conference of Missionary Societies in Great Britain and Ireland. All such trustees are to be subject to the Secretary of State's approval and if the auditors or trustees at any time question the Directors' proposals as to the amount of profits to be carried forward or put to reserve the matter is to be decided by the Secretary of State. The Directors of the Company hold office at the pleasure of the Secretary of State who must approve their remuneration, and who also has the right to require an investigation of the company's affairs at any time. In the event of the company being wound up the shareholders shall receive out of the assets available for distribution repayment of their paid up capital and any arrears or accruals of dividend, the surplus assets being payable to the Trustees of the surplus Profits.<sup>9</sup>

As doubts had arisen and were likely to arise about the validity of certain matters in connection with the above mentioned transfers the Basel Mission Trading Company Act of 1920 was passed by the Indian legislature to terminate such doubts and to constitute the trustees named in the first indenture into a body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal who might sue and be sued by the corporate name of the Mission Trust of Madras. Provision is made for the appointment of successors to the original trustees by the Government and by the National Missionary Council of India. The Mission Trust of Madras has moreover the right, with the previous consent of the Governor-General in Council to vary or add to the

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9. op. cit. p., 4.

conditions on which the business was transferred to the Commonwealth Trust, so long as the variations or additions are not inconsistent with the general scope of the original deed. And if at any time the Commonwealth Trust shall in the opinion of the Governor-General in Council fail to observe the covenants of the trust, the Mission Trust of Madras has full power to re-enter and take possession of the said premises.<sup>10</sup>

Although the trust deeds and the prospectus of the company indicate that it was the intention of the Government as well as the promoters of the company that the properties should be administered and the profits utilised in the manner in which the Basel Mission Trading Company had been doing, there is no specific direction in the trust deeds, or the Memorandum of Association requiring the Commonwealth Trust to give preference to Basel Mission Christians in recruiting labour. In fact the constitution of the Commonwealth Trust does not envisage any point of contact between the Basel Mission Church and the Company. With the passage of time therefore the original intention of the trust has been forgotten, and the Commonwealth Trust has departed from the policy of their predecessors in providing employment to Christians. As we have already noted in Chapter X the proportion of Christian employees in the factories has undergone so drastic a change that the percentage

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10. See indenture whereby the Mission Trust of Madras transferred the business to the Commonwealth Trust. This indenture was registered at Madras on 21st August, 1920, being Serial No. 2825 of 1920 in Registration Book No. 1 of the Office of the Registrar of Madras, Chingleput.

has fallen from 75 to below 50. That this is not due to lack of applicants from the Christian community will be evident from the number of unemployed and under-employed in the Malabar Church.<sup>11</sup>

Nor has the Commonwealth Trust been able to maintain the traditions of the Basel Mission Trading Company which contributed upwards of £ 20,000 a year for mission work from its Indian and African branches together. In fact under the Commonwealth Trust surplus profits have not been available at all for many years. Thus for example in 1925 the Board of Management who had obtained large advances from the Commonwealth Trust through the German Missions Committee had the total amount of Rs. 60,000 converted into a loan which need not be repaid but would be set off against surplus profits when they became available. The documents which were mortgaged by the Board as security for this loan were not however returned till 1938 when at last the company was able to cancel the loan out of surplus profits and grant a discharge of the mortgage. Afterwards again there has been no allocation of surplus profits.<sup>12</sup> Trade depression is usually assigned as the reason for the absence of surplus profits. And no doubt in the last one decade Indian factories have had to face very unfavourable times. Yet the influence of other factors cannot be discounted. Under the present

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11. See annual report on the condition of the Malabar Church submitted to the Malabar Church Council which met in January 1938 and published as an appendix to its minutes, p. 23.

12. See Report of the Directors and statement of Accounts of the Commonwealth Trust Limited for the years 1937, 1938, 1939.

management the European staff in the factories is paid on a scale very much in excess of what obtained before the properties were transferred. Under the Basel Mission Trading Company the General Manager in India received a monthly salary of Rs. 180 with free quarters and certain small allowances for children like any other missionary in service; the General Manager of the Commonwealth Trust in India today receives Rs. 1,300 a month. As the shareholders of the company are not entitled to anything more than a cumulative dividend of 5 per cent on the shares and as this 5 per cent is guaranteed to them even in the event of liquidation they do not seem to be much concerned about the increase in overhead charges.

Besides, profits made in India have also been utilised to make up losses in Africa.<sup>13</sup> This procedure seems to be at least unfair, if not illegal. Because the Indian properties of the company are held on trust and subject to the condition that the surplus profits which accrue from them will be utilised for the benefit of people in India itself. On the other hand the African business of the company is not in any way connected with the above mentioned properties except that it is also managed by the same company. For although the African factories did at one time belong to the Basel Mission Trading Company compensation has been paid for them by the Colonial Government who confiscated the business in Africa.

The net result of leaving the Basel Mission Indus-

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13. See Profit and Loss Account for the Year ended 30th September, 1938 of the Commonwealth Trust, Ltd.

tries in the hands of a trust company not subjected to any effective criticism either by the beneficiaries or any other controlling body has been disastrous. The Basel Mission Church is rapidly losing a source of employment on which they have depended for a hundred years ; and the Basel Mission Society to whom the surplus profits from the industries were at one time a dependable source of income has been compelled on account of their present uncertain nature to retrench many useful activities in Malabar. Indeed the trust company has largely frustrated the intentions of those who through years of toil and self-sacrifice built up this beneficent activity in India.



## CHAPTER XVI

### Looking Forward

"India," writes Bishop J. W. Pickett, "has had a long and painful experience with poverty. Through centuries of suffering her masses have developed a rare capacity for enduring privation. That poverty is one of the real rulers of India is less a figure of speech than a grim fact. Neither government nor caste, neither religion nor custom rules the daily lives of the rural masses in this sub-continent more surely than poverty does." <sup>1</sup> Though the average per capita income in the Malabar Church stands much higher than what Bishop Pickett found among the mass movement converts whose condition he surveyed, the Malayalee Christian shares with India's millions this national bondage. Indeed he cannot dream of emancipating himself from the clutches of poverty apart from his nation.

Although the economic future of the Malabar Church may thus be bound up with the economic development of the country as a whole, the foregoing pages indicate that within a limited sphere it is quite possible for the community to take her destiny into her own hands. While throwing in her weight in favour of any movement calculated to advance the economic progress of the nation, the Church should therefore maintain a separate organization to watch over her economic interests. Such an organization may not be

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1. Christian Mass Movements in India, by J. Waskom Pickett, p. 86.

able to work a miracle. But within the limitations imposed by the economic framework of the country much can yet be accomplished.

To fit in with the administrative machinery of the Malabar Church any Economic Committee which may be set up should remain under the supervision of the Church Council. Care should however be taken to see that the harmony of the committee is not unduly disturbed by militant Church politics. In order to ensure efficiency it may also be desirable to make the committee representative of all the important interests concerned. A committee consisting of members who can speak with authority on matters connected with agriculture, trade, industry co-operation, the labour movement, and Church administration will command a measure of confidence which laymen alone are not likely to inspire. A Secretary from the Malabar Christian College will moreover help to connect the committee with the educational departments of the Church and the mission. In fact now the Malabar Christian College serves the needs of the Christian community mainly through the men who learn within its walls; but as the Lindsay Commission pointed out, there are other ways in which institutions of higher learning might serve a community which so badly needs knowledge about the solution of its problems.<sup>2</sup>

2. "If the Christian Colleges are to serve the community in the new ways in which they are now needed, they will have to have men on their staff who are concerned with finding answers to questions which the community needs to have answered and ensuring by various forms of extension work that their answers get to the men who have to apply them in practice". Lindsay Commission Report on Christian Higher Education in India, p. 160.

Research, education, propaganda, organization and guidance should form the main functions of the committee. For some time to come further research into the economic condition of the Malabar Church may not be absolutely necessary. The attention of the committee will have to be concentrated on the most convenient means for getting the people to move along the direction indicated by the present survey. The Church schools where most Christian children have their primary education can be of incalculable service in this respect. At present the system of education imparted in these institutions bears no relationship to the economic needs of the community. The distance between the earth and the sun may be for example an interesting piece of information to a child who must till his father's field when he grows up. But it will be much more profitable for him to know something about modern agricultural practices by which he may increase the output from his land. The Economic Committee must decide how best the system of education now followed in the Church schools may be modified in order to create a new outlook in the rising generation, and equip them more efficiently for the business of life.

The educational work of the Economic Committee must also include a training class for training labour leaders. Among industrial workers in Malabar, whether Christians or non-Christians, one will find many who by general education and personal aptitude are eminently fitted to be leaders among their companions. If such men are instructed by a respon-

sible body in methods of organization, labour laws, and other subjects which a labour leader is expected to know the labour movement in Malabar may be weaned from communistic influences and set on its own legs. The Malabar Christian College has already established a night school for industrial workers. It may not be difficult for the Economic Committee to induce the college authorities to proceed one step further. A training course for labour leaders need not of course be confined to Christian workers, though in the interests of the community Christian applicants must be preferred in the beginning. If properly conducted a training class of this type is bound to be supported by the employees and the employed alike.

Occasional conferences for clergymen and school masters who labour in the different congregations will form another educational activity of the proposed committee. In the past both the Church and the school have to some extent ignored the economic needs of the Christian community. Theological seminaries and normal schools have often forgotten the physical man. Both clergymen and school-masters therefore come out ill-equipped to serve the Christian community in one of its simplest needs. Group discussions will go a long way in endowing Christian workers with a new idea of their responsibilities, and the ability to discharge them.

In order to reach the majority of adult Christians however other methods will have to be used. The Economic Committee must work out a systematic programme for propaganda in the Church. With a



population which is largely literate, such as we have in the Malabar Church, the written word is likely to form the most convenient, though not always the most effective, means of approach. But lectures, dramatic performances, music parties may all be pressed into service. Students and other young men can play their part in the endeavour, and make the attempt really a social activity. Whatever be the method chosen, the programme will have to be carefully worked out. For in modern times propaganda forms a highly developed art. Indeed it has been so delicately applied that cruder manifestations often produce undesirable results.

When the members of the Church have become aware of their economic disabilities and developed a longing to improve their condition, it will be time to organize them for definite purposes. The Economic Committee may for example help the people in a place to found a Better Living Society on co-operative lines in order to control extravagant expenditure. Or it may help the workers in another centre to start a labour union. The assistance rendered by a body of experienced men will certainly be of great value to ordinary people who desire to make a new experiment. The demand for a new institution must however come from the people whom it is expected to serve. Without such a demand any attempt made by an enthusiast to impose from outside is more likely to fail.

The Economic Committee may also serve as an advisory body. There are matters in which the Church Council or the Mission Council has to take the initiative.



Thus for example it may be necessary to send a memorial to the National Christian Council or make an alteration in the Church rules concerning inter-religious marriages. As an expert body the Economic Committee should take the responsibility for bringing such questions before the administrative councils competent to proceed in the matter.

About a hundred years have now elapsed since the Basel Mission Church was founded in Malabar. Its well-wishers from far and near must therefore look with eager expectation at the picture which this survey reveals, and the prospect it holds out. No doubt we find glaring weaknesses in the economic structure of the Malabar Church. Considering however the vicissitudes which this community has encountered through one eventful century, its assets must be taken as more than equal to its liabilities. Perhaps the community's greatest economic asset consists of the people themselves. From a handful of seekers, illiterate, disinherited, drawn from mutually exclusive castes, the Church has grown into a homogeneous society, literate, healthy, progressive and organized. Whatever may be the economic disadvantages which surround them to-day, unless the spirit of service and leadership has departed from their midst the community can look forward with confidence and hope to the future.

## Appendix No. I

### Questionnaire Addressed to Clergymen in Charge of Churches not connected with the Basel Mission

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I Name of the Church :—

II Place :—

III Strength of the congregation :—(Indian Christians only)

1. Number of families :—

2. Number of adult males :—

3. Number of adult females :—

4. Number of children (below 18)

IV Members who came from other districts :—

Districts.	Number.

V The denominations to which members belong :—

Denominations.	Number.

VI Number of literate adults (able to read the Bible)

1. Men :—

2. Women :—

VII Occupations :—

Names of occupations.	Number employed.	Names of occupations.	Number employed.
1. Cultivation		9. Public administration	
2. Cattle and sheep rearing		10. Lawyers, doctors, teachers etc. not in Govt. Service	
3. Stone-cutting		11. Persons living on their income	
4. Fishing		12. Domestic service	
5. Manufacturing industries		13. Cottage industries	
6. Transport		14. Others.	
7. Trade			
8. Police and the army			

## VIII Classification of families according to income.

Classes.	Number.
1. Families getting below Rs. 20/- a month	
2. " " from Rs. 20/- to 50 "	
3. " " " 50 to 100 "	
4. " " " 100 to 150 "	
5. " " " 150 to 250 "	
6. " " " 250 to 500 "	
7. " " above 500 "	

IX Income of the Church (annual):—

X Expenditure of the Church (annual):—

XI Church Property :—

Place :—

Date :—

Name of the person who supplied  
the information :—

**General Questionnaire Addressed to Families (relations living together) in the Basel Mission Church.**

1. Does your family belong to Malabar ?
2. When did your family or your paternal ancestors convert ?
3. Please fill up the following details about the members of your family :—

	Female	Male
Number		
NAME		
Relationship to the head of the family		
Date of birth		
Age		
Married, Widows or Widowers		
Education : — 1. Examinations passed 2. Apprenticeship taken		
Main occupation		
Subsidiary occupation		
Occupation and name of the establishment where employed.		
Periods of enforced idleness in case of irregular employment—in a month or year		
Income per period of payment		
In the case of those above 12 who are not students but who are unemployed, period of such unemployment		
Any other information.		

4. What system of inheritance did the family follow before conversion?
  - a. Marumakkathayam
  - b. Makkathayam
5. Did the family lose by conversion
  - a. Any land?
  - b. Any occupation?
6. Does the family possess any land? (approximate area and nature)
  - a. Janmam.
  - b. On lease.
7. Does the family own any house?
8. Does the family own any live-stock?

No.	Breed.
a. Cows	
b. Oxen	
c. Buffalo (male)	
d. „ (female)	
e. Goats	
f. Poultry	
9. Does the family own any industrial establishment, or have a share in a partnership or company?
10. How many members have insured their lives?
  - a. In ordinary life insurance
  - b. Insurance according to dividing plan
11. How does the family invest its savings?
  - a. Banks
  - b. Mortgages
  - c. Loans
  - d. Ornaments
  - e. Provident Fund
12. Is the family in debt?



Reasons for borrowing.	From friends, co-operative society, money lenders or banks.	Amount.	Rate of Interest.	Security.

13. Has any member joined a co-operative society ?  
 14. Has any member joined a funeral fund ?  
 15. Are there any near relations outside Malabar ?

Name.	Occupation.	Place.

Place:

Name of person who wrote out  
the replies.

Date:

## Appendix No. III

### Questionnaire Addressed To Cultivators

#### I Members of the family

1. Name of the head of the family
2. Number of :
  - a. Males
  - b. Females
  - c. Children
3. Do all members help in cultivation ?

#### II Nature of right on the land

1. Janmam
2. Lease ; name of Janmi
3. Do you have any trouble from the landlord ?

#### III Nature of land, area and crops.

Nature of land.	Area	Crops
1. Garden land		<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Cocoanut palms</li><li>2. Fruit trees</li><li>3. Minor crops</li></ol>
2. Wet land		<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Paddy ; number of crops and duration of each.</li><li>2. Minor crops ; time of each crop.</li></ol>
3. Dry land		Crops and how often.

#### IV Income from cultivation (Show amount of crops reserved for consumption separately).

No.	Items	No. of crops taken a year	Total yield	Cash received by sale			Any other infor- mation
				Rs.	As.	Ps.	

## V Expenses of cultivation.

No.	Items.	Payment in kind.	Cash equivalent		
			Rs.	As.	Ps.
1	Hired labour				
2	Seeds				
3	Implements				
4	Manure				
5	Food for cattle				
6	To hire bullocks				
7	Marketing of crops				
8	Rent				
9	Revenue				
10	Anything else				

## VI Does the family have any live stock ?

	No.	Breed.
1.	Oxen	
2.	Cows	
3.	Buffaloes (male)	
4.	„ (female)	
5.	Goats	
6.	Poultry	
7.	Is there any pedigree bull near by ?	

VII Have you introduced any of the following improvements in cocoanut cultivation? If so how far is it successful? If not, why? Does the cost stand in your way?

1. Select seed nuts.
2. Select seedlings for planting.
3. Under plant only when trees are 60 years old.
4. Plant in straight rows.
5. Dig or plough whole area at the beginning of S. W. Monsoon, and not merely round the trees.
6. Plough or dig again with cessation of rains to keep surface as loose as possible and free from weeds.
7. Sow a green manure crop in the interspaces with the first rains and plough it in.
8. Apply manures like ashes, cattle manure, or concentrated manure.

VIII Have you introduced any of the following improvements in paddy cultivation? If so how far is it successful? If not, why? Does the cost stand in your way?

1. Use as seed higher yielding strains evolved by the agricultural department.
2. Select your seeds from the fields instead of merely keeping aside some corn after the whole has been threshed.
3. Plough the field immediately after harvest.
4. Use an iron plough.
5. Pay sufficient attention to weeding.
6. Conserve cattle manure properly.
7. Compost organic waste.
8. Use poudrette.
9. Grow green manure when other green leaves are not available.

10. Use concentrated manure.
  11. Cutting of paddy closer to ground.
  12. Conserving hill grass as hay or silage.
- IX Do you suffer from any pest? If so, what provision is there to fight against it?
- X Is there need for more water at any time in the year? If so any provision for obtaining it?
- XI Are you put to inconvenience by surplus water in the rainy season? If so can you not get rid of it by deepening the channels or by other means? Does it cost very much to do so?
- XII What convenience is there for taking the crops to the market?
- XIII Have the prices of the crops you cultivate risen or fallen during the last few years?
- XIV Does the family have any other source of income besides agriculture?

Place :

Date :

Signature of Surveyor.



## Appendix No. IV

### Questionnaire Addressed to Agricultural and Casual Labourers. (Men, Women and Children)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Month.	Kind of Work.	No. of days employed in a month.	Reason for scarcity of work, if any	Hours of work per day	Daily wages in money	Wages in kind and its money value		Food clothes or anything else added to wages and its price	Any other information
						Rs. As. Ps.	Thing		
January									
February									
March									
April									
May									
June									
July									
August									
September									
October									
November									
December									

1. What do you do when there is no work ?
2. Are you subject to any kind of serfdom ?
3. Have you any difficulty in obtaining work on account of your religion ?

Place:

Date:

Signature of Surveyor.

## Appendix No. V

### Questionnaire Addressed to Industrial Labourers (Men, Women, and Children.)

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1. Name of labourer:
2. Nature of his work:
3. Name of industrial establishment where employed:
4. Does the establishment use power ?
5. How many are employed there ?
  - a. Below 10
  - b. 10—20
  - c. 20—1000
  - d. Above 1000
6. Were you recruited directly or through an agent ?  
If through an agent, what does he get by recruiting?  
Does he have any control after recruitment ?
7. What are
  - a. The hours of work ?
  - b. Intervals of rest?
  - c. Weekly holidays (every Sunday ?)
8. Do you get any holidays with wages ?
9. Is there regular work in the establishment or are there periods of enforced idleness ? If so how many days' work a month do you get on an average ?
10. What is the rate of wages for your work ? (so much per time or piece work ?)
11. In addition to regular wages do you get any allowance, bonus or over-time remuneration ? How much do they come to in a month or year ? At what rate are they calculated ?
  - a. Allowance:
  - b. Bonus:
  - c. Over-time remuneration:

12. What are the pay periods?
13. How many days have you to wait for payment after earning it?
14. Does the factory provide a sufficient supply of drinking water?
15. Does the factory provide a suitable room for use during periods of rest?
16. Do you get any help from the factory when you are ill?
17. Do you get any gratuity or pension on retirement?
18. Is there any Provident Fund for you in the factory? If so is it contributory or non-contributory?
19. Do you get any loan or advances from the factory?
20. Is there any co-operative credit society or store in the factory for your benefit?
21. What measures are taken in the factory for enforcing discipline? Have you to pay fines? If so, are the reasons for which one may be fined found on the notice board?
22. How much fine do you usually pay in a wage-period? Have you ever paid more than half-anna in the rupee?
23. In the case of absence, damage to property done by you, or services rendered to you by the factory, does the factory make a more than proportionate deduction from your wages?
24. Does the factory make any provision for housing the labourers?
25. At what distance do you live from the factory?
26. Does the factory provide any maternity benefit for women workers? For how many days before and after confinement? At what rate?
27. Do you have more than 50 women employed in the factory?

28. Is there a room in the factory for the use of children under six ?
29. Was there any accident in the factory within a year, either fatal or involving partial or total disablement for more than 7 days? Was any compensation given? If not, why ?
30. Does the factory provide any sports, other recreations, or reading room for you ?
31. Does the factory make any provision for your education or the education of your children ?
32. Does the factory display the following on the notice board ?
  - a. Abstract of Factory Law and rules
  - b. Abstract of Wages Payment Act and rules
  - c. Abstract of Maternity Benefit Act and rules
  - d. Abstract of Workmen's Compensation Act and rules
33. Have you read these notices ? If not, why ?
34. Is there a labour union in your factory ? If so, is it prospering ? If it is not prospering what is the reason ?
35. Is there any system of insurance in your factory against sickness, disablement, old age, death etc ?
36. Does the factory make any attempt to exercise Christian influence upon the workers by means of morning prayers or other means ? What is your opinion about these ?

Place :

Date :

Signature of Surveyor.

# Appendix No. VI

## Questionnaire on Domestic Expenditure

Name:.....

No.....

PARTICULARS.	Quantity		Cost per month		
	Weekly	Monthly	Rs.	As.	Ps.
I FOOD					
1. Rice (mill polished or not)					
2. Other grains, (specify)					
3. Dhall, Bengal gram, green gram etc.					
4. Potatoes					
5. Unions					
6. Vegetables					
7. Fish					
8. Meat					
9. Cocoanut					
10. Milk					
11. Salt					
12. Chillies					
13. Tamarind					
14. Oil (gingelly, cocoanut etc.)					
15. Other condiments					
16. Ghee					
17. Sugar					
18. Jaggery					
19. Coffee					
20. Tea					
21. Refreshments					
22. Others					
23. Pansupari					
24. Smoking					
25. Liquor					
Total					



PARTICULARS.	Quantity.		Cost per month		
	Weekly	Monthly	Rs.	As.	Ps.
II FUEL & LIGHTING					
1. Firewood					
2. Charcoal					
3. Kerosene oil or Electricity					
4. Matches					
5. Others					
Total					
III DRESS & TOILET					
1. Females					
2. Males					
Total					
IV HOUSE RENT.					
V. HOUSEHOLD REQUI- SITES EG. VESSELS ETC.					
VI. MISCELLANEOUS					
1. Servants					
2. Education					
3. Dhoby					
4. Soap, washing soda etc.					
5. Barber ...					
6. Travelling to and from place of work					
7. Medical charges					
8. Religious observan- ces, feasts & festivals					
9. Amusements and recreations					
10. Repayment of debts					
11. Provident fund, insurance, kuri etc.					
12. Remittance to dependents living elsewhere					
Total					
Total expenditure per month					
Total income per month					

## Appendix No. VII

### Questionnaire on Marriage Expenses

1. Name of Bridegroom :
2. Occupation and address :
3. Name of his father or guardian :
4. Father's occupation and address :
5. Bride's name :
6. Occupation and address :
7. Name of her father or guardian :
8. Her father's occupation and address :
9. Where the marriage took place :
10. Date of the marriage :

Expenses.	Rs. As. Ps.	Any further information.
1. Expenses for the engagement		
2. Ornaments		
3. Clothes		
4. Furniture		
5. Pandal, decoration etc.		
6. Relations coming and staying		
7. Feast		
8. Travel		
9. Payment to the Church		
10. Other expenses		
Total		

Place :

Name of person who supplied  
the information

Date :

Signature of Surveyor.

# Appendix No. VIII

## Death According to Cause 1930—1938.

Name of the Station.	Smallpox	Cholera	Plague	Consump- tion	Fever	Dysen- tery and Diar- rhoea	Accident	Child- birth	Others	Total
Madai	...	...	...	1	5	2	...	...	18	26
Matini (1935—1938)	...	...	...	...	3	4	...	2	4	13
Pappiniberry	...	...	...	3	7	2	...	...	7	19
Cannanore	...	...	...	27	25	5	...	4	95	156
Chowa (1931—1938)	...	...	...	2	11	5	...	...	21	34
Nettur	1	...	...	7	15	5	1	...	33	62
Tellicherry	...	...	...	7	4	...	...	...	7	18
Chombala	...	...	...	7	7	...	...	...	...	32
Calicut	1	...	...	50	60	4	...	...	13	368
Futhiyara	2	...	...	17	20	11	7	2	286	106
Feroke	1	...	...	5	2	12	2	1	53	28
Codacal	...	3	...	2	9	11	...	...	21	28
Farapperi	...	...	...	5	15	5	1	...	44	75
Vanianculam (1935—38)	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	34 <sup>b</sup>	60
Chalisherry	...	...	...	2	2	2	...	1	5	7
Palghat	1	...	...	6	10	...	...	...	10	17
Melparamba	2	1	...	6	6	5	1	...	12	30
Total	14	4	0	148	201	68	12	12	635	1,094

N. B. According to the census taken by the Basel Mission year after year there were 1175 deaths in this period. But from the burial registers kept at the different stations it has been possible to trace the cause of only 1094 of these.

## Appendix No. IX

Births according to Sex in the Basel Mission  
Church, Malabar.

PERIOD.	Births	
	Male	Female
1900—1905	635	621
1905—1910	727	637
1910—1915	654	641
1915—1920	649	529
1920—1925	539	531
1925—1930	548	550
1930—1935	584	510
1935—1938	478	417

N. B. The above statistics are gathered from the Baptismal Registers maintained in the different congregations, and show some difference from the figures mentioned in the census reports published by the mission.

## Appendix No. X

Deaths according to age in the Basel Mission  
Church, Malabar.

1930—38.

AGE.	Deaths	
	Male	Female
Under 1	74	95
1—5	80	77
5—10	18	22
10—20	25	32
20—30	49	53
30—40	46	61
40—50	42	39
50—60	49	66
60—70	81	84
Over 70	58	78

N. B. The above statistics are gathered from the Burial Registers maintained in the different congregations, and show some difference from the figures mentioned in the census reports published by the mission.

# Appendix No. XI

## Occupations : Basel Mission Church, Malabar.

Occupation.	Number of workers.		Occupation.	Number of workers.	
	Male	Female		Male	Female
I. EXPLOITATION OF ANIMALS & VEGETATION:—			2. Railway employees...	24	—
1. Cultivating owners...	3	—	IV TRADE:—		
2. Cultivating tenants...	20	3	1. Traders & agents	78	7
3. Agricultural labourers...	114	99	2. Clerks in commercial establishments.	100	2
4. Cowherds, fishermen & hunters...	4	—	V PUBLIC SERVICE:		
II. INDUSTRY:—			1. Government servants...	87	30
1. Hand-loom ...	183	119	2. Municipal servants...	11	17
2. Power-loom ...	220	142	3. District Board servants...	14	73
3. Hosiery ...	18	26	VI PROFESSIONS:—		
4. Embroidery & needle work...	—	46	1. Teachers in private service ...	59	67
5. Tile factory ...	175	130	2. Teachers and clergymen, in the mission or church,	231	81
6. Food industries	2	—	3. Private doctors, midwives etc.	16	24
7. Printing ...	10	—	4. Lawyers ...	1	—
8. Tailors ...	67	—	VII PERSONS:—		
9. Barbers ...	33	—	LIVING ON THEIR INCOME:—		
10. Dhobies and cobblers...	3	1	1. Pensioners ...	95	110
11. Carpenters ...	46	—	VIII DOMESTIC SERVANTS:—		
12. Metal workers.	16	—	1. Domestic servants...	25	94
13. Repairers of watches, musical instruments etc.	6	—	IX OTHERS:—		
14. Mechanics and fitters...	22	—	1. Unproductive ...	1	3
15. Electricians ...	11	—	2. Others ...	36	—
16. Masons ...	6	—			
17. Contractors ...	5	—			
18. Other industries...	29	9	Total...	1822	1083
III. TRANSPORT:—					
1. Bus drivers, conductors etc.	51	—			



# Appendix No. III

## Expenses of Rice Cultivation on One Acre of Land at Codacal

Items	First crop				Second crop				Remarks	
	Labour		Wages or prices		Labour		Wages or prices			
	Men	Women	Rs.	As. Ps.	Men	Women	Rs.	As. Ps.		
1. Seed	...	125 lb.	3	12 0	75 lb.	...	2	4 0	Second crop re-quires more ploughing if land is to be irrigated	
2. Ploughing	...	6 times	6	0 0	4 times	...	4	0 0		
3. Repairing Bands	...	4	1	0 0	4	...	1	0 0		
4. Breaking sods	...	4	0	8 0	...	...	...	...		
5. Manure	...	...	5	9 0	...	...	5	9 0		
6. Sowing	...	...	0	4 0	...	...	...	...		
7. Transplanting	...	...	...	...	...	...	7	5 0		
8. Weeding once	...	10	0	10 0	No weeding	...	...	...		
9. Lifting water	...	...	...	...	For 60 days	...	11	4 0		
10. Reaping and threshing ...	...	...	...	...	Both men and women employed. They transport the crop home; 1/9 of the crop paid to them as wages.	...	...	...		
11. Drying	...	2	0	2 0	...	2	0	2 0	For field irri-gated. For field not irrigated. The period for which irrigation is necessary de-pends on nature of land and rains.	
Details of expenditure on transplanting:—				Total						
1. Preparing ¼ acre of land	...	...	0	4 0						
2. Seeds 75 lb.	...	...	2	4 0						
3. Sowing	...	...	0	2 0						
4. Lifting water for 40 days	...	...	2	0 0						
5. Pulling out seedlings (8 women)	...	...	0	10 0						
6. Bringing seedlings to field (3 men)	...	...	0	12 0						
7. Transplanting	...	...	1	5 0						
Total				7 5 0						
				17 13 0						
				31 8 0						
				20 4 0						

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# Appendix No. XIII

## Christian Co-operative Credit Societies (1938—39)

Name of Society	No. of members	Share capital in rupees	Members deposits in rupees	Reserve Fund		Non-members deposits in rupees	Bank loans in rupees	Loans: Total outstanding in rupees	Overdues in rupees	Audit classification
				Invested	Un-invested					
1. Cannanore Christian Co-operative Society	152	2,056	—	610	1,211	750	—	4,184	3,071	B
2. Mattool "	28	63	—	—	1	150	—	220	88	C
3. Nettur-Tellicherry "	123	414	77	721	161	1,517	—	2,346	1,665	C
4. Annasseri field labourers "	33	31	—	—	—	—	53	72	72	C
5. Calicut Christian "	91	1,582	7	683	777	78	—	3,348	1,145	B
6. Vaniankulam "	22	55	—	118	199	—	150	162	70	C
7. Palghat "	76	194	20	174	526	1	—	750	441	C

## Appendix No. XIV

Statistics : Income from Church Schools and  
Expenditure on them, 1933—39.

### I N C O M E

	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Fees ...	3,480	3,856	3,964	4,132	4,235	4,297	4,275
Govt. Grant ...	8,216	(6,856)	7,036	9,504	12,034	10,488	10,719
		(2,057)					
Miscellaneous ...	74	26	97	4	352	—	79
Provident Fund ...	798	792	740	799	754	774	1,100
Pension Fund...	—	—	159	148	143	130	—
Rents ...	—	48	48	48	71		
Deficit ...	4,471	4,205	5,850	2,343	339	1,632	1,950
Total...	17,039	17,810	17,894	16,978	17,928	17,321	18,123

### E X P E N D I T U R E

	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Staff ...	14,527	15,402	15,429	14,842	15,504	15,544	16,045
Peon and sweeper ...	216	273	279	289	293	282	282
Equipment ...	168	188	180	48	54	...	131
Annual Repairs ...	708	407	399	165	181	...	53
Special Repairs ...	15	112	886	11	409	134	...
Transfers ...	71	31	...	39	71		
Miscellaneous ...	251	59	3	23	17	10	2
Provident Fund ...	1,083	988	252	1,199	1,058	1,047	1,100
							329
Pension Fund ...	...	...	157	143	143	180	...
Contingency ...	...	251	198	209	198	174	181
Administration ...	...	129	111	...	...	...	...
Total ...	17,039	17,840	17,694	16,978	17,928	17,321	18,123

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